

CONTENTS

VARIA.

PAGE

126

Poetry and the Public—The Imagistes—A Censorship on Poetasters—A National Theatre—Molière as Antidote—Experiments with Puppets—Sumurun—Mermaid Nights—Literary Dishonesty—A Futurist Number of POETRY AND DRAMA—The Death of the Poet Laureate—Particulars of POETRY AND DRAMA.

POETRY :

Emile Verhaeren	139
Rabindranath Tagore	142
Victor Plarr	145
John Drinkwater	155
Harold Monro	157
John Helston	165
Henry Simpson	168

STUDIES AND APPRECIATIONS :

Emile Verhaeren : an Appreciation	<i>Michael T. H. Sadler</i>	172
Thomas Hardy of Dorchester	<i>Edward Thomas</i>	180
John Donne	<i>Rupert Brooke</i>	185
The Greek Genius (II)	<i>A. Romney Green</i>	189
A Model Anthology	<i>J. C. Squire</i>	197

CHRONICLES :

Current English Poetry	<i>The Editor</i>	201
Dramatic Chronicle	<i>Gilbert Cannan</i>	211
French Chronicle	<i>F. S. Flint</i>	217
Italian Chronicle	<i>Arundel del Re</i>	232

REVIEWS :

237

The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse—The Poetical Works of George Meredith—Poems New and Old : Henry Newbolt—Love-Poems and Others : D. H. Lawrence—The Venturers : Vivian Locke Ellis—Lyrics : Lady Margaret Sackville—A Boy's Will : Robert Frost—Death and the Princess : Frances Cornford—Songs of Alban : E. S. Lorimer—Narcissus : Edward Storer—The Book of Lies : Frater Perdurabo—The Agate Lamp : Eva Gore-Booth—Agnus Dei : Nancy Campbell.

A LIST OF RECENT BOOKS [ANNOTATED] 254

B

125

VARIA

POETRY AND THE PUBLIC

A MAJORITY of intelligent people still argues that poetry is unpopular: it is one of the objects of POETRY AND DRAMA to dispel this illusion. On New Year's Day, 1882, Matthew Arnold uttered his melancholy conjecture: "If I live to be eighty, I shall probably be the only person left in England who reads anything but newspapers and scientific publications." The most unconsidered pronouncements of great men are often best remembered by posterity, for men and women love to admire folly in the great. It is plain that Matthew Arnold's foreboding was entirely groundless. Science performs a certain amount of hack-work for poetry, but ultimately is as little concerned with it as, for example, Bernard Shaw. Science is not popular, any more than religion is popular, or anything else that requires effort of mind. Newspapers are popular because their perusal entails no more effort than, for instance, any idle or foolish conversation. But the appreciation of civilised poetry requires study, and study requires effort; therefore most people placidly and very deliberately leave poetry alone. That is not to say they dislike it. A good song pleases all people; a bad one leaves them either indifferent or angry. They do, however, hate long-haired young gentlemen, probably from the University, in velvet coats and baggy trousers, though not as *poets*, but as poor representatives of humanity. They suspect them of fooling the public, which is never too lazy to resent being fooled. Its hatred of such young gentlemen has so little to do with poetry that, if any were to rise in his velvet coat and start a good song, the public would join him in the second stave, and roar with him by the third. But that is not his object: his songs appear at extremely high prices in limited editions, which it would be an impertinence (the young gentleman himself will agree with us) for the public to soil with its fingers. And the young gentleman (let us remind him) laughs at the public in a spirit of recrimination, chiefly because the public has laughed at him. He had much better forget his grievance, and remember that Shakespeare wrote for the great public, Goethe too, and probably also

Homer. They are popular poets, but good ones. The bad popular poet (the young gentleman forgets), such as Tennyson, Lewis Morris, or Kipling, is bad because, as we are reminded in the survey of current English poetry in this number of *POETRY AND DRAMA*, he studies what the public likes instead of forcing it to like what he may choose to give it. If we could agree with that majority of intelligent people that poetry is unpopular, we should add that the average poet has made it so. But poetry is not unpopular. Sub-consciously Matthew Arnold, appreciating the romance of the prospective situation, wanted to be that "only person." Yet he, if any one, must have known that poetry is the most popular thing in the world. The dissatisfaction of the public is the result, not of too much, but of too little, poetry. Our opinion is that poets and professors, instead of abusing the public for its deficiency of appreciation, should, with occasional humbleness, remember rather to deplore their own inability to provide the public with the poetry it desires.

THE IMAGISTES

IN the March number of the Chicago magazine *Poetry* there is a note on "Imagisme" by Mr F. S. Flint, followed by a short article entitled "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" by Mr Ezra Pound. "Some curiosity has been aroused concerning *Imagisme*," writes Mr Flint, "and, as I was unable to find anything definite about it in print, I sought out an *Imagiste*, with intent to discover whether the group itself knew anything about the 'movement.' " For the benefit of the ignorant we tender the information that Imagisme is a new school of English poetry, still at present very small, and under the formidable dictatorship of Ezra Pound. We learn that the Imagistes wisely have published no manifesto. Mr Flint, however, reproduces a few of their rules "drawn up for their own satisfaction only."

1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm : to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

By these standards, we learn, they judge all poetry, and find most of it wanting. The Imagistes have apparently established some kind of censorship on the poetaster. Without taking them too seriously, we cannot but admire their conviction and courage. The devices, explains Mr Flint, whereby they persuade approaching poetasters to attend their instruction are : (1) They show him his own thought already splendidly expressed in some classic. (2) They rewrite his own verses before his eyes, using about ten words to his fifty.

A CENSORSHIP ON POETASTERS

EZRA POUND is a stern dictator. He hates dogma. ("Never consider anything as dogma," he writes.) Nevertheless, Nietzsche-like, he is himself a dogmatist. His *tips* to poetasters are in terse, if somewhat racy language. "Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap. . . . Don't chop your stuff into separate *iamb*s. . . . If you want the gist of the matter go to Sappho. . . . Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another. . . . Don't be 'viewy.'" Perhaps it is hardly fair to illustrate his style by these jagged strips. Though it is certainly not in the stately tradition of an English "Quarterly," it is sometimes magnificently incisive. He is, indeed, a purging influence in our world. "It is better," he writes, "to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works." (This advice, we presume, applies to poetasters only.) Under the heading *Language* he qualifies some of his general statements. "Use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something. Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace.' It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realising that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol. Go in fear of abstractions. Don't retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. . . . Don't imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music. . . . Use either no ornament or good ornament." Mr Pound might usefully publish a manual for poetasters, though we fear the apparent carelessness of his style would debar him from the confidence of those earnest ladies and gentlemen. His

dictum on the Image is one of the most excellent and accurate of his pronouncements: "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. . . . It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time-limits and space-limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art."

A NATIONAL THEATRE

THE question of a National Theatre has been raised and seriously discussed in Parliament. "Parliament," however, remarks the *Times*, "is not the most congenial atmosphere for discussing the drama or indeed any other of the arts. Facts and figures are more in place there. . . . The three unities cannot be brought into any relation with the twelve o'clock rule. Shakespeare cannot catch the Speaker's eye. . . . Before the nation provides a National Theatre it should see that it secures a National Drama. The theatre will then come, almost unbidden. The medieval passion for building cathedrals was a sequel, not a preliminary, to the conversion of the populations to Christianity." The *Times* comments are, as usual, most apposite, but is the inference correct that we have no National Drama? Not altogether. Melodrama in the best direct English tradition is played everlastingly and with unwavering popularity throughout London, the suburbs, and the provinces. Melodramas such as *The Whip*, *Nell Gwynn*, *The Only Way*, *The Lights of London*, *Drake*, *The Breed of the Treshams*, and also the Christmas pantomimes are all national in atmosphere and in style. Shaw, Galsworthy, and the others are not; Mr Barrie is perhaps more so. Recent poetic plays such as those of Tennyson, Mr Stephen Phillips, and others were not sufficiently in the tradition to attract audiences. Shakespeare is our only national poetic dramatist, and we shall, of course, eventually decide to build him a theatre. Of all modern drama, popular melodrama is certainly most in his tradition; if we have any national consciousness at all, it is represented in melodrama, not in the pamphlet, tract, and sermon-play, or by the problem-play schools. Let us not dissemble. National drama is not deficient in quantity, but in quality. If we were to provide it with a

permanent home, none could, perhaps, be more suitable for it in its present condition than Hammerstein's folly, the London Opera House. It would be a fine and useful achievement to centralise the people's melodrama in such a people's theatre, and in such a street as Kingsway ; and thus relegate it, clear our minds, and look about us to see what is left. A *constructive* national drama, truly representative of the spirit and romance of a nation, only flourishes under the stimulus of an urgent and articulate demand. The expression from nearly all quarters of the necessity for a national theatre, the rapid increase of provincial repertory theatres, and the production of several beautiful and brilliant plays, such as *Nan* or *The Silver Box*, during the last ten years, are all tokens that within the next ten years we shall undoubtedly, if tardily, follow the example of most European countries in providing our drama with a fitting home, and such actors as Forbes-Robertson with regular and honourable employment.

MOLIÈRE AS ANTIDOTE

SIR HERBERT TREE'S production of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* draws the attention of the public once more to Molière and his place in the art of the theatre. In England his plays are neither well-known nor often acted; indeed, they are contrary to the temperament of our theatre, where the romantic tradition, together, quite lately, with some modern realism and Ibsenism, almost dominates the stage. But the reaction against morbid, exaggerated psychological problem plays, which finds vent in the cult for light opera, rag-time, mimodrama, and variety entertainments, leads us back to the consideration of the *commedia dell'arte* as developed and modified by Molière and Goldoni. The strict adherence to the Aristotelian unities, the peculiar artifice in plot and characterisation, both basic elements of their work, appear to our modern sense to limit, and sometimes even destroy, the psychological interest of the plays. The omission, on the other hand, of a too personal element endows their *dramatis personæ* with a universal interest and significance, and by a process of reversion to type, renders, indeed, the characters true to all time, without loss of individual and intrinsic value. Through Molière we are carried back to the true spirit of

the theatre ; to the theatre which stimulates and refreshes, by its simplicity and balance ; to an art which expresses, without too graphically depicting, life in all its complexity and unity.

Recent researches in the history and art of the theatre have proved the truth of Goethe's advice : " He who would work for the stage . . . should leave nature in her proper place, and take careful heed not to have recourse to anything but what may be performed by children with puppets upon board and laths, together with sheets of cardboard and linen."

EXPERIMENTS WITH PUPPETS

THE advantages of an impersonal theatre with fixed figures or masks once established, the transition to the *Über-Marionette*, and thence to the Puppet, is brief. The advantages of the latter have been abundantly demonstrated by Mr Gordon Craig and Jack B. Yeats, as also through the performances of Mr Signoret's marionettes at the Petit Théâtre des Champs Elysées and the Italian Marionettes in Naples. We recommend a close perusal of Volume V., No. 1, of the *Mask*, in which most aspects of the subject are fully discussed. With a stage about the same size as an ordinary Punch-and-Judy show, the simplest possible setting, fixed figures used symbolically, and without any attempts at realism, experiments in the interpretation of new poetic drama will be conducted next autumn in the Reading-room of the Poetry Bookshop. To avoid the difficulties of all mechanical devices, so stimulating to an audience's sense of humour, an interlocutor seated to the side of the proscenium will briefly and unofficially furnish all the necessary particulars of stage direction. In these performances simplicity will be preserved, a pleasant harmony maintained : the result, it is hoped, will provide an illuminating, if inadequate, interpretation of some of the best specimens of our much-neglected poetic drama.

SUMURÛN

THE confusion of music-hall and theatre, and the consequent application of music-hall standards to the theatre, has necessarily resulted in a misinterpretation and misjudgment of the exact value and significance of

the mimodrama. This has become singularly apparent in the recent revival of Prof. Rheinhardt's *Sumurun* at the Coliseum. The happy conjunction of the critics with the public taste has produced an entertainment which, while being no more a wordless play than a Punch-and-Judy show, has the advantage of all the tricks and cheap tawdriness of Drury Lane pantomime and Lyceum melodrama. Should any one remember the production of the same play in its entirety at the Savoy in October 1911, and compare it with the present one, having due regard for the changes and deterioration in cast and mounting; the inadequacy, the futility, and the inartisticness of the latter will speak for itself. If we remember right, one of the main objections to the theatre version was the nearness of the spectators to the stage (which hindered their appreciation of the whole), and the length. *Sumurun*, however, like *Turandot*, is not built on the plan of *The Miracle*; it is not meant to be a choreographic spectacle, but an example of the *théâtre intime*, in which the spectators are brought into direct and quasi-personal touch with the action. The delicate treatment and finesse which this requires in order to give one the complete illusion of an *Arabian Night*, is lost on a vast stage as at the Coliseum. The effects become loose and blurred, one misses all clarity and simplicity, and the path of roses across the stalls loses its direct significance, appearing nothing more than a producer's trick. With regard to the length, the emasculation demanded by a music-hall public does not make the action either clearer or swifter. The side-play, one of the essentials, is much reduced, the psychological developments are marred, and become heavy and coarse, and the whole production misses fire. Add to this, clumsy scene-shifting, and synoptical notes on the bioscope, and you have a potted *Sumurun*. It is hard to believe that Prof. Rheinhardt is not at last tired of trying to educate London to his artistic productions.

MERMAID NIGHTS

THE Duchess of Sutherland, we learn, was invited to preside at the "Mermaid Night" organised by the Poetry Society in the International and Renaissance Halls of the Café Monico on June 1. This is the second of the Society's attempts "to recapture some of the famous" (or

another account uses the word "elusive"). "atmosphere of the old 'Mermaid Nights.'" The first, held at the Cheshire Cheese on March 14, under the presidency of Sir Herbert Tree, proved, we learn, a "daring experiment," though "every one who participated in the festival . . . was of opinion that the proceedings, which were neither forced nor extravagant, had been entirely successful." The *recapture* was therefore apparently effected. From the *Standard* account, characterised authoritatively as "a delightful description of the proceedings," we learn "altogether the atmosphere was recaptured very well. . . . Sir Herbert Tree delivered some gems of Shakespeare, making Falstaff play Hamlet and Hamlet Falstaff, which brought a round of applause from the poets and poetry-lovers that made the old cellar tremble. . . . Good Americans," adds the enthusiastic reporter, "would have given untold gold to be there, and it is to be hoped that this gathering of modern Mermaids will be the first of many." Several other such successful entertainments have been organised by the Society. The banquet to the descendants of poets is still fresh in our memories. The Society being strictly democratic, and the subscription having been standardised to suit all purses, it is obviously important that the funds should occasionally be augmented by pleasant festivals. A few years ago, for instance, there was a costume dinner, which certainly provided considerable entertainment to poets and poetry-lovers. The suggestion of the *Standard* is not altogether inapposite: some combination with "good Americans" might produce, if well organised, such a festival as would place the Poetry Society in a position of permanent financial security.

LITERARY DISHONESTY

IT is the custom of many publishers to issue advertising circulars of new books or new editions, in which favourable quotations from reviews are given, either *in extenso* or in the form of excised phrases. With this custom, as applied to general literature, we have little concern and less quarrel, but we should like to draw attention to its results when employed for the widespread advertisement of new poetry, and to the endless opportunities it affords for the abuse of the public taste.

The advent of a new author—particularly of a new poet—is rarely, if ever, immediately recognised by the general reading public. The general public is not interested ; its natural instinct is to believe what it is told, when it is told it long enough, or with sufficient emphasis. Neither is the new poet ordinarily recognised by the mass of critics, which represents, as a mass, an intelligence and an intuition little above that of the public which it is its business to inform. He is recognised, if at all, by a small body of men, who possess in an unusual degree the necessary qualifications of interest, insight, and knowledge. The opinion of these men, by a process which it is not necessary to discuss, ultimately comes to stand for the opinion of the world, and it is only to them that the new poet must look for an appreciation or a criticism that should afford satisfaction to himself.

Returning to the question of the publisher's circular, it will readily be understood of what value these advertisements are either to the public or to the poet. To the former they are almost invariably misleading, since the quotations inserted are only those most likely to induce purchase, and are often single phrases which, taken out of their context, give an utterly false impression of the general tone of the review. To the latter presumably they bring pence ; but at what cost ? At the cost of his independence of public opinion, of his sense of humour, and of the self-critical attitude without which fine art cannot be produced. No self-respecting writer would permit the publication of advertisements such as those we have in mind. But it is not the poet whom we wish to protect from himself and his publisher. If he need such protection it is in all probability not worth the affording. With the public it is a different matter, since, in the abasement of its taste and the abuse of its confidence, the recognition of the art—difficult enough to obtain in any circumstances—must suffer.

We have before us a perfect example of the type of circular referred to. After a statement to the effect that copies of the book have been accepted with thanks by H.M. the King and H.M. Queen Alexandra, it proceeds with a quotation from a London weekly review, couched in general terms, and beginning : "The true poet cannot expect a proper acceptance in the morning of his genius."

There is nothing to indicate that this quotation is in direct reference to the advertised poet, but the implication is obvious. For all that we know, it may or may not have been so. From our point of view the difference is not of vital importance. Following on this and occupying the remaining

seven pages of the pamphlet is a list of "tags," taken from reviews. They include such phrases as "Homeric," "Shakespearean," "Miltonic," "Shelley," "Byron," "inspired," "wears laurel wreaths," etc., etc. The reviews from which these tags are excised are quoted from local, provincial, and colonial journals, such as the *Sussex Daily News* and the *Singapore Free Press*—all, from a literary point of view, perfectly valueless. The above list of great names will deceive nobody with any knowledge of poetry; but that it has deceived a public of some kind or another is proved by the fact that the book has, since its publication a year ago, already run into four editions. It remains to say that, having perused a considerable portion of the 302 pages which form its contents, we have come to the conclusion that any haphazard quotation will suffice to show the pretentious and bombastic quality of the author's verse.

GREAT EMPIRE (nay, let's call thee "Mother"—it
The sweetest word life's lexicon hath writ),
Salute the Day, thy Monarch, and our God,
And crave His guidance of the sceptred rod!

E'en Plato (called "divine") promulged his Cross
Of mystical philosophy: indeed,
The Pagans but supplied true types of our
Own Christian Logos, Trinity, and, too,
The Incarnation, Crucifixion, and
The Resurrection, and Eternal Life.

We will labour the point no further. Any village grocer who labels or sells his margarine as butter, any tin-pot company issuing a falsified prospectus, is indictable under criminal law, yet their offence against the public trust, and against their more scrupulous competitors in trade, is usually no greater, we should like to say, is much less, than that of publishers of pamphlets such as the one under consideration. With them rests the whole blame. The author may be pardoned his conceit, the reviewers may be forgiven their ignorance; but publishers are rarely fools, and that those who concoct these misrepresentations are no exception to the rule, needs little demonstration. At a time when certain genuine attempts are being made to bring a wider public to the true appreciation of poetry, not by *vulgarisation*, but by putting all that is best before it and trusting to its right perception, we feel that we cannot too strongly condemn this commercial engineering of the market, which constitutes a mischievous misrepresentation and a wilful degradation of the art.

A FUTURIST NUMBER OF POETRY AND DRAMA

THE Autumn number of POETRY AND DRAMA (published September 15) will be devoted chiefly to studies in futuristic thought, and will contain examples (in translation) of some of the famous poems of continental futurists. An article has been promised by one of the most prominent poets of the Italian futurist school. It may be noted that, the outlook of POETRY AND DRAMA being eclectic and non-partisan, the subject will be freely considered in all its conflicting aspects; and a constructive attempt will be made to distinguish the nature of true futurism from its many pretentious, if ephemeral, misrepresentations.

THE DEATH OF THE POET LAUREATE

WE regret to have to record the death, on June 2, of the Poet Laureate, Mr Alfred Austin. The news having only reached us on the eve of going to press, we are unable in this number to attempt any estimate of his poetry. Born at Headingley, near Leeds, on May 30, 1835, Mr Alfred Austin was appointed Laureate in 1896. With his death it is probable that the official post will be abolished.

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- ¶ Copies are procurable through all Booksellers and Newsagents.
- ¶ The Annual Subscription is 10s. 6d. post free to all countries.
- ¶ Outside contributions are considered, and the Editor will endeavour to return all declined MSS. if typewritten and accompanied by stamped and addressed envelopes.

POETRY

TWO NEW POEMS	EMILE VERHAEREN
FOUR POEMS FROM THE BENGALI	RABINDRANATH TAGORE
AN INFORMAL EPITAPH IN MEMORY OF A YOUNG POET .	VICTOR PLARR
THE BUILDING	JOHN DRINKWATER
FANCIES STUDIES IN EMOTION }	HAROLD MONRO
TWO POEMS	JOHN HELSTON
THE REVUE OF THE POETS' CLUB	HENRY SIMPSON

[Handwritten scribble]

TWO NEW POEMS

By Emile Verhaeren

LEGENDES DES BOIS

L'ÉTÉ

SUR la plaine, les eaux, la bruyère, les brousses,
L'automne aux feuilles d'or agite l'ouragan ;
Déjà dans le taillis s'est fané l'origan
Et le vent aux cents mains brasse la forêt rousse.

Un bûcheron qui dévalait
Du haut des bois vers la clairière
A rencontré, la nuit dernière,
Le bel Été qui s'en allait.

Pourquoi partir à l'aventure,
Été, mon bel Été, alors
Que des roses grimpent encore
Sur mon pignon et ma toiture.

Si je m'en vais c'est à regret,
Bon bûcheron, tu peux m'en croire :
Mais la mort vient, la nue est noire
Et l'âpre autan mord les guérets.

Par les fenêtres de ma chambre,
Le soleil entre en plein midi,
On y rencontre un coin tiédi
Pour s'y blottir même en Décembre.

Hélas ! combien je serai las
Et pauvre et toussottant un rhume
Les jours de ténèbre et de brume
Quand la clarté n'y viendra pas.

Pour réchauffer jusqu'à ton âme,
Veux-tu mon foyer tout entier
Avec son feu large et altier
Et la couronne de ses flammes ?

Un pareil feu dure un instant
Et consume souche et brindille ;
Mais, dis-moi donc, as-tu des filles
Qui vont avoir bientôt vingt ans ?

Ma fille aînée est fiancée
A son cousin depuis deux mois,
Et l'amour vrai tremble en leurs voix
Quand ils échangent leur pensée.

Bon bûcheron, je resterai
Dans ta maison claire et tranquille,
Et dans le doux cœur de ta fille,
Pendant l'hiver, je fleurirai.

Sur la plaine, les eaux, la bruyère, les brousses
L'automne aux feuilles d'or agite l'ouragan.
Déjà dans le taillis s'est fané l'origan
Et le vent aux cent mains brasse la forêt rousse.

NARCISSE

DANS ces taillis de pins et d'ormes
L'ombre à minuit prend tant de formes !

Quelqu'un passe par la casine
Et son cœur bat dans sa poitrine.

Sous le ciel bleu la lune est blanche
Et luit et joue à travers branches.

L'homme avance ; les bois l'accueillent,
Le vent lui parle dans les feuilles.

Et les taillis de pins et d'ormes
Prennent soudain sa propre forme.

* * * *

Au va et vient des rameaux forestes
Il voit ses bras, il voit ses gestes,

Là-bas, dans les mares hazardes
Il voit ses yeux qui le regardent.

Il voit sa bouche large ouverte
Aux pentes d'une écorce verte.

Il voit son front et son visage
Dans le dessin d'un court branchage.

Bientôt la peur de son propre être
Le bouleverse et le pénètre.

* * * *

Ses doigts tâtent soudain l'écorce
Et reviennent palper son torse ;

Ses yeux fouillent les eaux dolentes
Puis regardent ses mains tremblantes ;

Il ne sait plus qui fait un geste
Ou lui ou bien la branche foreste.

Oh ! Cette mare au clair de lune
Qui l'hallucine et l'importune.

Il fuit, revient et se fourvoie
Et dans soi-même enfin se noie.

EMILE VERHAEREN

FOUR NEW POEMS

(Translated from the original Bengali by the Author)

I

THE odour cries in the bud, "Ah me! the day departs, the happy day of spring, and I am shut up in my petalled prison!"

Lose not heart, timid thing! Your bonds will burst, the bud will open into flower, and when you die away in a fullness of time, even then the spring will last.

The odour pants and beats itself within the bud, crying, "Ah me! the hours pass by, yet I know not where I am going, what it is I seek!"

Lose not heart, timid thing! The spring breeze has overheard your desire, the day will not end before you have fulfilled your being.

Dark seems the future and the odour cries in despair, "Ah me! through whose fault is my life so unmeaning? Who can tell me, why I am at all?"

Lose not heart, timid thing! The perfect dawn is near when you will mingle your life with all life, and at last know all your purpose.

II

WHEN the lamp went out by my bed I woke up with the early birds. I sat at my open window with a fresh wreath on my loose hair.

The young traveller came by the road in the rosy mist of the morning.

A pearl chain was on his neck and the sun's rays fell on his crown.

He stopped before my door and asked me, with an eager cry, "Where is she?"

I could not utter for shame, "She is I, young traveller, she is I."

It was dusk and the lamp was not lit.

I was listlessly braiding my hair.

The young traveller came on his chariot in the glow of the setting sun.

His horses were foaming at the mouth and there was dust on his garment. He came down at my door and asked, in a tired voice, "Where is she?" I could not utter for shame, "She is I, weary traveller, she is I."

It is an April night. The lamp is burning in my room. The breeze of the south comes gently. The noisy parrot sleeps in its cage.

My bodice is of the colour of the peacock's throat and my mantle is green as young grass.

I sit upon the floor at the window, watching the deserted street.

Through the dark night I hum, "She is I, despairing traveller, she is I."

III

THE tame bird was in the cage, the free bird was in the forest.

They met when the time came; such was decreed by fate.

The free bird cries, "O my love, let us fly to yonder wood."

The cage-bird whispers, "Come hither, let us both live in the cage."

Said the free bird, "Midst bars, where is there room to spread wings?"

"Alas," cried the cage-bird, "I know not where to sit perched in the sky."

The free bird cries, "My darling, sing you the songs of the woodlands."

The cage-bird says, "Sit by my side, I'll teach you the speech of the learned."

The forest-bird cries, "No, ah no! songs can never be taught."

The cage-bird says, "Alas for me! I know not the songs of the woodlands."

Their love is intense with longing, but they never can join their wings.

Through the bars of the cage they gaze on, and vain is their wish to know each other.

They flutter their wings in yearning, and sing, "Come closer, my love!"

The free bird cries, "It cannot be. I fear the closed doors of the cage."

The cage-bird whispers, "Alas! my wings are all powerless and dead."

IV

“A H, poet, the evening draws near ; your hairs are turning grey.
“Do you, in your lonely musings, hear the message of the hereafter?”

“It is evening,” the poet said, “and I am listening lest some one call from yonder village, late though it be.

“I watch if young straying hearts chance to meet together, and two pairs of eager eyes beg for music to break their silence.

“Who is there to weave their passionate songs, if I sit on the shore of life and contemplate death and the beyond ?

“The early evening star disappears.

“The glow of the funeral pyre slowly dies by the silent river.

“Jackals cry in chorus from the courtyard of the deserted house in the light of the worn-out moon.

“If some wanderer, leaving home, come here to watch the night and with bowed head listen to the soundless murmur of the darkness, who is there to whisper the secrets of life into his ears if I, shutting my doors, should try to free myself from mortal bonds ?

“It is a trifle that my hairs are turning grey.

“I am ever as young or as old as the youngest and the oldest of this village.

“Some have smiles, sweet and simple, and some a sly twinkle in their eyes.

“Some have tears that well up in the daylight, and others tears that are hidden in the gloom.

“They all have need for me, and I have no time to brood over the after-life.

“I am of the age of each ; what matter if my hair turns grey ? ”

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

AN INFORMAL EPITAPH IN MEMORY OF A YOUNG POET

YOU who so loved all grey religious things—
Lands of old saints and graves of bardic kings,
Would you were sitting on this balcony
Round which the great bat floats on stealthy wings.

Would you could gaze with me upon the deep,
Calm, silent harbour lying there asleep—
Would you could gaze and sometimes say a word,
Poet, whose presence in my heart I keep.

Ah yes, to me you sometimes have come back
Along some mystic and nocturnal track,
Friend, and a little while with me have spoken,
Keeping my tortured brain upon the rack,

A strange preoccupation in your eyes,
And in my slumbering wit a wild surmise,
A frenzied search in pigeon-holes of Dream,
Which still no clue, no sesame supplies!

Often, in dreams, to some lone rendezvous,
Some place of ruins and horizons blue,
Seamed with memorial forests and scarred hills,
One travels dear dead faces to review.

Puzzled, in sleep, you say to him or her :
"So thou returnest, long a wanderer!"
Silent and kind, your dead arrive : they rest,
Having performed long journeys, they aver.

If, by the casual opening of a door,
We could have audience of those gone before,—
If, by the sudden turning of a key,
We could resume some thread of talk once more!

Should we be happy, or shrink back in dread
From faces awfully transfigured?
Alas, it is a barren, guessing game.
Till we be dead, we shall not know the dead!

* * * * *

Darkling, a shadow in the harbour lake,
A fishing-boat drops out to the night's take.
After the fireworks on regatta night
It seems the ghost of man's primeval ache.

So from the midst of music and of laughter,
Which in Life's village beats from floor to rafter,
Between the shadows of the looming shores
Some mortal ship drops down into Hereafter.

Obscurely silent, into th' outer dark
You lapsed away within your little barque.
Nay, you for such a voyage unprepared
Knew not the shadowy mainsail for your sark.

Oh, suddenly your last long trip you took,
Not as do fishermen, with line and hook,
But with the freightage of your tortured past
And one unlaurelled, lovely poetry-book!

* * * * *

For you, of Waring's stock, how friendly proved
The glamour of these seas, that you so loved,
Whether through Lyonesse unto Land's End
Or round the Armoric Finistère you roved!

For you, a Poet, how the timid West
Proved nurse ! Upon her grey religious breast
What tenderness, and faith, and love, for you
Her storied desolation still expressed !

To-day I toiled with lines that wavered wide,
Or plumbed ten fathom deep in the blue tide,
To hook the monster pollack, but in vain
The fisher's Spartan art I plied and plied.

Were you not with me in the boat to-day ?
Your kind eyes, bent near mine across the bay,
Seemed musing on the splintered promontories,
The haunted cliffs of Cornwall, scarpt and grey !

Complex in shadow, mossed with lichen old,
Those headlands on my dreams loom, fold on fold ;
I start again before their drifting hues,
Rubies alembicated into gold.

Empurpling deeps of waters far below,
Fringed with the wild foam's upward-drifted snow,
And, far above, deep heaven's empurpled blaze,
The enormous lovely scarps upon me glow.

O painter, dip thy pencil in gold mist,
And fill thy palette full of amethyst,
Take blood, and dusky wine, and emerald dawn,
And paint, and paint, inspired impressionist !

Whether grey Cornish Newlyn be thy home,
Or, like old Claude, thou haunt the fens of Rome,
Thou'lt still be painting at the knell of doom,
Uncaught the splendours of this land of foam !

You, on that other grey Armoric coast,
You, "passion-tossed and driven from pillar to post,"
The "sleepy pasture" of dead Breton folk
Called, when you lingered there, "a poor worn ghost."

Clad like a fisher in *béret* and *blouse*,
Near craggy Finistère you oft would use
Dreaming to sail, like "Waring," your strange kin,
Of whom they brought your well-loved Brownning news.

There, had you foundered in some whirlpool wide,
Like Shelley you had floated with the tide
To the banked sands, where long-tressed peasant people
Had gathered reverent unto your side,

And silently had borne you, crowned with flowers,
To some old ossuary's sea-fronting towers,
Where, shadowed by the swinging votive ships,
You had escaped your last unhappy hours!

Illumined by the red flame's deathless crest
On the worn runic altar, you might rest,
While, in the half-gloom, white-coiffed women would
Mutter their rosaries among the blest.

And we, far-wandering, might sometimes resort
To the wild, beautiful Armoric port,
And by our modern Shelley's grave retire
To muse how Art is long, but Life is short.

Best had due sepulture by you been found
Close to some fox-earth on high heathered ground
Near Cambeak Head, that looks on such a scene
As Claude discovered not all Europe round.

For miles unto the West upleaps the coast
In sheer perspective, until it is lost
Where dim Tintagel beetles o'er the deep,
A vanished glory, a mysterious boast!

Their harps unstrung in nerveless arms, alas,
Hither grey ghosts of poets oft might pass
To pause beside the stone above your head,
Noiseless amid the brake and dewy grass.

Hither blind seers their ghostly way might feel,
And ragged hermits might in spirit steal,
And old crazed saints climb up from tide-girt caves
Now haunted by the shy, half-human seal.

Yet 'twas not here your poet's veins grew cold,
Not here sad stories of your death are told:
London, your birthplace, gathered in her son—
London, where most you dreaded to grow old!

"When I am old," you sang, and seemed to dread
The gloom of tedious hours that loomed ahead,
Dreaming of withered hands stretched towards the fire
And pale lips mumbling of lov'd poets dead.

* * * * *

To-morrow with Euphrastes I shall fish,
And strive of pollack to achieve a dish.
Euphrastes is a mighty man of science,
And not to talk of letters seems his wish.

Through golden hours in this soft Cornish clime
We float at sea, nor take account of time.
Incessantly we talk, as townsmen will;
We talk of the bacillus—not of rhyme.

The critics seized on you the very day
They laid you deep within your Kentish clay.
That skilled young person who discovered "Art,"
Proclaimed you Chatterton without delay.

Damn the cheap critics—pardon the brave word !
When clear you sang, the critics never heard :
When best you plied your tongue and used your pen,
They voted you consumptive and absurd.

They talk of the Republic of the Pen,
A commonwealth of kindly, courtly men !
Say rather Literature's a *mala vita*,
A sort of reticent secret bandits' den,

Where he lives happiest and least accurst
Who asks most thieves to dinner and writes worst,
And all confess themselves in terms of cant
After assassinating some one first.

They called you Chatterton : he too died young !
They wrote of you as though your song were sung
In some back garden of the illiterate,
Or from the social ladder's lowest rung !

To-day the clever quidnunes all contend
For smatterers : you were not that, O friend !—
To have been nurtured by great Academe,
Stinks in some honest nostrils without end !

* * * * *

To-day we scared a sun-fish on the sea—
A strange and tropic monster floating free
Close to the sunlit surface, nor disturbed
Till the long boat-book broke his reverie.

Such is the poet ; from some alien zone
He floats into the region of things known,
And every bully, imbecile, and quack
Prods him till he darts back into his own.

You were th' instinctive artist without scope,
Horizon, sedulous training, or the hope
Of plaudits, power, emoluments, that give
Life its best salt even to some saintly Pope.

Prone, like to you, with gyved and tortured wrists,
Small poets and obscure idealists
Write on the sand, Oblivion's Juggernaut
Still grinding tow'rd them down life's crowded lists.

" Art for Art's sake "—you chose the better part ;
You verily believed in serious Art.
I think at your autopsy they'd have found
The hackneyed phrase engraven on your heart.

You sometimes wearied me by talking much
Of Art—a lame man babbles of his crutch ;
I still suspect what savours of a prop,
And yet your art was actual as the Dutch.

* * * * *

Often I peeped of old above the tops
Of blinds that veiled the doors of little shops,
To see if you inside unwisely fed
Like all your kind, who scorn nutritive props.

In one such small *taberna*—ask not where,
Lest the descriptive writers go and stare—
You, wholly careless in all social arts,
Once flogged yourself into a love-affair !

I hardly think, dear friend, you cared for love :
Before the female eagle you turned dove,
And fled in terror, as the just will do ;
But martyrdom you chiefly longed to prove.

And martyrdom you proved, as all men will
Who seek of human love to take their fill,
Forgetting, as idealists forget,
That human love is very human still.

Ah, vanisht friend, the bitter present thing
Is the remembrance of a pleasant spring
When you rejoiced as others all untried,
And hours we spent in kindly mimicking.

Had I then hazarded, " Suppose me dead,"—
" Now write my funeral verses," had I said,
How you'd have skitted in an epitaph
The buzzing follies thick about my head !

* * * * *

I write and write : the tall books on the shelves
Laugh with discretion up among themselves,
Watching their dim-eyed owner hourly checked
As in the Mine of Memory he delves.

Books, papers, prints, long hence you may remain
To witness sorry searches, studious pain,
When he, my friend, and I have been forgot,
And ev'n brown fox-marks — — 's poems stain.

A time will come, if one resist the rage
Of climate, sickness, care, when on life's stage
One shall confront the newly-entered masks,
A bent, abnormal buffer sick with age.

What will it matter if one still find friends
And converse which good company attends,
Books, a sufficiency of wine to drink,
And a smooth exit when the drama ends ?

But what if friends at length you cannot find,
Nor babbling tongue to bring the past to mind,
Nor kindly hand to smooth a pillow roughened
By feverish Memory's last dream unkind ?

Such lone old men I've known—one, two, or three,
To some bright fantasies still held in fee,
But groaning parlously towards the close,
And I have wished that Death would set them free.

Age you forgo : you shall not feel its chill,
The fading senses and the enfeebled will.
Yes, in despite of pain and man's neglect,
Yours was a perfect euthanasia still !

The winter night before you gently died
At least one friend sat listening at your side.
Eager you talked of what you meant to do,
Or over new-found Dickens laughed and cried.

Softly at dawn in that staunch friend's embrace
The Shadow reached your still vivacious face,
And, at the window, so your friend has told,
A little London bird sang maddin grace.

Now it is I who daily speak of you,
And 'twill be I, dear vanished singer, who,
Ageing may tell young inattentive fellows—
"That famous-grown dead singer once I knew !

Nay, once I loved him. Never such another
Gentle, kind confidant and perfect brother.
I have been brotherless ; my dwindling race
Fans scant fraternal flames for death to smother.

Now you are gone, I softly make my moan,
And hear the ripple in an undertone
Singing around the harbour plaintively,
And long and long for your return alone !

VICTOR PLARR

THE BUILDING

WHENCE these hods, and bricks of bright red clay,
And swart men climbing ladders in the night?

Stilled are the clamorous energies of day,
The streets are dumb, and, prodigal of light,
The lamps but shine upon a city of sleep.
A step goes out into the silence ; far
Across the quiet roofs the hour is tolled
From ghostly towers ; the indifferent earth may keep
That ragged flotsam shielded from the cold
In earth's good time : not, moving among men,
Shall he compel so fortunate a star.
Pavements I know, forsaken now, are strange,
Alien walks not beautiful, that then,
In the familiar day, are part of all
My breathless pilgrimage, not beautiful, but dear.
The monotony of sound has suffered change,
The eddies of wanton sound are spent, and clear
To bleak monotonies of silence fall.

And, while the city sleeps, in the central poise
Of quiet, lamps are flaming in the night,
Blown to long tongues by winds that moan between
The growing walls, and throwing misty light
On swart men bearing bricks of bright red clay
In laden hods ; and ever the thin noise
Of trowels deftly fashioning the clean
Long lines that are the shaping of proud thought.
Ghost-like they move between the day and day,
These men whose labour strictly shall be wrought
Into the captive image of a dream.
Their sinews weary not, the plummet falls
To measured use from steadfast hands apace,
And momentarily the moist and levelled seam
Knits brick to brick and momentarily the walls
Bestow the wonder of form on formless space.

And whence all these ? The hod and plummet-line,
The trowels tapping, and the lamps that shine
In long, dust-heavy beams from wall to wall,
The mortar and the bricks of bright red clay,
Ladder and corded scaffolding, and all
The gear of common traffic—whence are they ?
And whence the men who use them ?

When he came,

God upon chaos, crying in the name
Of all adventurous vision that the void
Should yield up man, and man, created, rose
Out of the deep, the marvel of all things made,
Then in immortal wonder was destroyed
All worth of trivial knowledge, and the close
Of man's most urgent meditation stayed
Even as his first thought—"Whence am I sprung ?"
What proud ecstatic mystery was pent
In that first act for man's astonishment,
From age to unconfessing age, among
His manifold travel. And in all I see
Of common daily usage is renewed
This primal and ecstatic mystery
Of chaos bidden into many-hued
Wonders of form, life in the void create,
And monstrous silence made articulate.

Not the first word of God upon the deep
Nor the first pulse of life along the day
More marvellous than these new walls that sweep
Starward, these lines that discipline the clay,
These lamps swung in the wind that send their light
On swart men climbing ladders in the night.
No trowel-tap but sings anew for men
The rapture of quickening water and continent,
No mortared line but witnesses again
Chaos transfigured into lineament.

JOHN DRINKWATER

FANCIES

I. THE REBELLIOUS VINE

ONE day, the vine
That clomb on God's own house,
Cried, "I will not *grow*,"
And, "I will *not* grow,"
And, "I *will* not grow,"
And, "I *will* not grow."
So God leaned out his head,
And said :
"You need not." Then the vine
Fluttered its leaves, and cried to all the winds :
"Oh, have I not permission from the Lord ?
And may I not begin to cease to grow ?"
But that wise God had pondered on the vine
Before he made it.
And, all the while it laboured *not* to grow,
It grew ; it grew ;
And all the time God knew.

II. AT THE GATE OF HELL

JANITOR : What have you done ?
WANDERER : Covered myself with shame.
JANITOR : You cannot enter.
WANDERER : I am tired.
JANITOR : Go back.
 Go.
WANDERER : I am weary.
JANITOR : You must kill yourself.
WANDERER : I am too tired. I have no courage.
JANITOR : Go.

WANDERER : But I desire to enter Hell.

JANITOR :

Go, Go.

WANDERER : Whither ?

JANITOR :

To earth. You have imagined sin,
Never performed it.

WANDERER :

Why ? How can you know ?

JANITOR :

You are too feeble. You have yet to learn
Your sin must be untroubled of all blame.
If you came here your body would not burn.
Go back. Go back. You must forget your shame.
After another century return.
Those only who have sinned may enter Hell to burn.

STUDIES IN EMOTION

I. DANCE OF SLEEP

I HAD a swift and sudden dream :
One moment with the dance of sleep
Was madly into rhythm swirled,
Gazed wide into the dancers' eyes,
And saw a terror ; for they seem
All laughing only not to weep,
All dancing only that their cries
May not disturb the waking world.

Oh, under every downward lid
I saw a white and hollow fear ;
Swift, swift they strain the fevered limb,
Swift lest the sad illusion break.—
I crouched into a corner, hid
That I might groan and they not hear ;
I watched the dance of sleep grow dim :
It is my vigil. I must wake.

II. THE TORTURER

INTO what cold street driven
Out of thy torture-chamber am I come?
Love! Love! Why didst thou cast me loose?
Save in thy house I have no home.
Had I become too patient of thy use?
Nay, but my body is burnt, scarred and riven.

Torturer, art thou not to me the same
As to the moth the flame?
Grant me before, with broken wing, I slink
Away from light, fall over from the brink
Of beauty, in one blind assault to fly
Against thee, be extinguished, fall and die.

I sweat, I tremble, but I will not faint,
Nor in dispraise, or hate,
Concede one word upon thee of complaint
For all that agony I bore of late;
Because I know
(And do therein most loyally rejoice)
It is my fate and all men's fate to go
Calling thee through the world and listening for thy voice.

Once, in among the haunted groves of Youth
I went all ways, not knowing what I sought.
I ran through shadows, where beyond,
Keen upon leaf and frond,
Seemed glitter as of Truth.
I groped a passage through the caves of thought,
Laboured for freedom in lugubrious mines,
Or in that other dark where Lethe flows
Crept in among the rolling mists of sleep,
Or hid myself for refuge in the vines,
Or cooled myself on marble, where the rose

Into the moonlight grows ;
Yet, yet no labour or delight could keep
My heart from tears that inwardly must weep.

So into wrathful silence for a while
I crept and wrapped myself in doubt,
No longer satisfied to weep or smile ;
Into the shadow came,
Watched my own spirit as a distant flame,
And cursed the hand that could not snuff it out.

I lingered, a most living pain,
Yet at the last no longer could refrain :
I rose against my fate in vain.
I knew some everlasting blaze
Of light behind the languid days ;
I raged against the undiscovered power
That hid within the passing hour.

In unperturbèd innocence
I took my questions into every place,
Peering for answers into every face,
Waited in expectation tense
Through silences at festivals
For such a sentence as not ever falls.

Life, like an army, I could hear advance,
Halting at fewer, fewer intervals.
At last, one twilight, as I stood before
A house, I put my ear against the door,
And heard inside the hollow ringing laughter of old Chance.
Then my bowed head I bared ;
Into that house I fared,
Sat at the everlasting banquet board—
Oh, 'tis a rout that join,
Jowl by jowl and groin by groin,

And how they drank and jested, and they capered and they roared,
And they praised the lordly banquet and felicitated the lord!

Hollow was the laughter that rang along the room;
And it always ended suddenly, like doom:
Then, in the dismal pauses when the wine was running low,
Lest a horrid silence fall,
They would swing their arms and call;
Or one of them quite suddenly would rise and laugh and go.

But I dressed myself in motley, and I quaffed,
And I laughed,
And I sported with the dice;
'Twas a rapid game:
Yet no gaming could suffice,
For a vision filled mine eyes,
And my head was always bowed,
And I saw as through a cloud,
And I thought as through a flame.

Love, Love, thou only canst arouse
The feasters in that house:
Through the portal, open wide,
I saw thee suddenly standing quiet outside,
And, as with wings upon my feet,
Dreamwise began to lean and glide,
Songwise began to call and greet,
Then ran, then ran, thee, thee to meet.

O hand! O eyes!
O lips! O hair!
O manly-wise!
O godly-fair!
O dweller in the Everywhere!

Love, Love, thou knowest, innocently
Into thy tall mansion went I,

Dazed with dreaming
Of thy delightful seeming :
I judged thee never by thy loud repute ;
I hoped thee not divine,
But only Fate—and mine,
Winged but the little that is winged the flute.

Strange, that I had not seen thy house before :
'Tis built upon the open way ;
I must on many a festal day
Have loitered at the open door.
Yet there must be some fainting air
They cannot pierce who would re-enter there;
For now I wander up and down in vain,
But cannot find the door again.

Oh, I am burnt and scarred and riven;
To him who has received thy brand
The world is terrible and strange ;
And he must weep, and he may range,
But he is cursed, and shall be driven
From every town through every land.

III. THE STRANGE COMPANION (A FRAGMENT)

THAT strange companion came on shuffling feet,
Passed me, then turned, and touched my arm.

He said (and he was melancholy,
And both of us looked fretfully,
And slowly we advanced together)
He said : " I bring you your inheritance."

I watched his eyes ; they were dim.
I doubted him, watched him, doubted him....

But, in a ceremonious way,
He said : " You are too grey ;
Come, you must be merry for a day."

And I, because my heart was dumb,
Because the life in me was numb,
Cried : " I will come. I will come."

So, without another word,
We two jaunted on the street.
I had heard, often heard
The shuffling of those feet of his,
The shuffle of his feet.

And he muttered in my ear
Such a wheezy jest
As a man may often hear—
Not the worst, not the best
That a man may hear.

Then he murmured in my face
Something that was true.
He said : " I have known this long, long while,
All there is to know of you."
And the light of the lamp cut a strange smile
On his face, and we muttered along the street,
Good enough friends, on the usual beat.

We lived together long, long.
We were always alone, he and I.
We never smiled with each other ;
We were like brother and brother,
Dimly accustomed.

Can a man know
Why he must live, or where he should go ?

He brought me that joke or two,
And we roared with laughter, for want of a smile,
As every man in the world might do.

He who lies all night in bed
Is a fool, and midnight will crush his head.

When he threw a glass of wine in my face
One night, I hit him, and we parted ;
But in a short space
We returned to each other melancholy-hearted,
Told our pain,
Swore we would not part again.

One night we turned a table over
The body of some slain fool to cover,
And all the company clapped their hands ;
So we spat in their faces,
And travelled away to other lands.

I wish for every man he find
A strange companion so
Completely to his mind
With whom he everywhere may go.

HAROLD MONRO

TWO POEMS

EVENING : WIMBLEDON

BLUE-SHOULDERED birds that sit and scream in woods,
That haunt the passing splendour on slow wings
And speed the falling leaf with sudden cries :—
These—and the wind in low autumnal moods ;
Where April's choir of wilding joyance sings
When loom-gales deck the skies.

No other sound : no footfall : the green grass
Gathers the dropping acorns one by one
The jays grow greedy over, gliding down.
And where the smiling white may-blossom was
Gloom, heavy-hearted, in a solemn sun
Old thorn-brakes bloody-brown.

Swart bracken and the brambles' spotted death
Fill the fast-flagging footsteps of the year.
The poplar has divested her of woe.
And all her spire the wind fills with his breath :—
He that sang Love all day, when leaves were near,
Sings now of Long-Ago.

That bluest of green trees, her sister dark,
No more now borrows dye from azure heaven
To paint her rustling vestures verdurous,
But quietly her limbs are motioned stark :
Where thrushes founded fanes of song at even
Stars find an empty house.

The birch strews every hollow deep with gold
And braids the twilight softly in her hair ;
Nor no man comes to mark her lovely loss,
Though in the dusk her beauties yet unfold
(And in the dusk her limbs are very fair)
Seven miles from—*Charing Cross* !

MIDSUMMER : MORNING

GO gladly ; but for greater joy lie down,
And Joy thy boon and bedfellow shall be—
Here where the parsley-ferns encompass thee
In fairy-forest fashion of their own.
And here, within the breath of breezes blown
From sunward, Joy shall voice about the woods
Her high inundant hour's infinitudes,
And rumours rife with amorous undertone.
Now passionate dim places gloom with grass
Deep under hazel arches dusk and still :
And where a drapet of dog-violet was,
White bedstraw is and golden tormentil.

* * * * *

My lady of all dear desire,
The year is at the full !
Mid-rapture like Midsummer breathes and sways
Of sweet things deepest done
Since bashful lips begun
When Spring came coyly to Love's long embrace.
Oh grant in dreams I may acquire
Some measure of thy grace !
Here are green grotts and grassy caverns cool :
Leaves dark with verdant sleep
Where lovers' limbs may keep
That eloquence no slumber's draughts may dull.

I feel in lover-wise
Thy hand across my eyes.
Thy hair is like a sunfire through green leaves wandering :
It burns upon my brow
Like kisses lingered through
When love for very Love's sake durst nought but kiss and cling.
If thou shouldst seek to slay me now,
Sweet, would I fear the fire ?
Or wake to wisdom where I dream a fool—
If thou shouldst bid me bide me
In folly, but beside thee ?
My lady of all dear desire,
The year is at the full !

JOHN HELSTON

THE POETS' CLUB REVUE

(Recited at a meeting of the Poets' Club at the Café Monico on May 20)

THIS is the year your sweetest rhymes should fix :
The Poets' Club attains the age of six.

Hail to the constant maid whose flowery chain
Hath caught a thousand poets in her train,
Inspired their pens with "black, immortal ink,"
And shone their moon, to which the planets wink.
Child of Apollo and Euphrosyne,
With heart of mirth and soul of poesy ;
We bless that evening, now so long ago,
When Arcady descended in Soho,
And in a café of Italian glory,
Thy life was started on a first-floor story.
Oh, with what curious course the years have run !
What hidden tears, what open-hearted fun !
Come then, joint Muse, inspire, and bid me speak
Of poets great and small, of proud and meek.

And first of him who sang the Spanish main,
Our Poet-buccaneer, who finished Spain.
Henceforth he reigns our new Grand-President,
Although he knew not what the title meant.

And next of him was once our guiding beam,
Who left the chair fair Helen to redeem.
The maid who launched a thousand ships is shriven,
And, in the opinion of the Club, forgiven.

"Gods of the mountains !" are your dreams forestalled ?
Can now the club no more be peerless called ?
He comes among us who can find no praise
Unless for poets in the *Nowadays*.

Now with the stage the Poets' Club's combined,
In steadfast British fashion, they have dined,
And in our garden for all men to see,
There springs the pattern of our Poe-tree.

Our Editor still peers from Pimlico,
Waiting the verses that we fear to show,
Bends on each shivering bard his glassy look,
And begs a contribution for the book.

Two singers in the Temple still have we,
One asks to breakfast, one invites to tea.

Pay tuppence, and you'll be there very soon,
Within a pale "Blue Grotto," 'neath the moon.
St. Bernard of Bohemia greets each guest,
Wearing the Club's gold medal on his breast.

After a chariot try a motor-bus;
Our rag-time Byron now is "One of Us."

What sobs are these, like gouts of Summer rain !
Who is't luxuriates in amorous pain ?
"Narcissus" in the stream lost loves descrying,
And Edward from the bank discreetly sighing.

You'll find him, if you mount his wooden stair,
Singing of Sirens seen in Leicester Square;
Lord Rathmell, of the voice of organ tone,
Uplifted near the Corner House, alone.

Master of epigram, and smart retort,
What bard could put our Horace out of court ?
Thickly his "Arrows of Adolescence" fly,
And hit the loose-tongued speaker in the eye.

A comet from the Rhymers' Club afar,
Still on our night shines genial poet Plarr,
With quiet winks of humour, and a tale
Of submerged poets fit to make us quail.

Her scented verse is slumbrous with the spell
Of long dead loves of Egypt; she can tell

Of Babylon's far Temples walled with crime,
Belshazzar's feast of infamy and wine.
She swims in secret lore of poisoned gems,
Queen Miriam of Chiswick by the Thames.

We hunt big game; we have a "Tigress" known,
And eke a poet into actress blown;
She once dropped verse for honey on our way,
But now her eyes say all she needs to say.

We own a comtesse, docile as a child,
Although her interests in life are Wilde,
And Antony, whose other name was Mark.
She soars and sings like an impassioned lark.

Of Secretaries still we have a pair,
Examples of the manly and the fair.
Amid the nimble glasses and the wine,
I found *him* where Bohemia loves to dine,
And muttering, as he neared th' alluring sweets,
"Oh, curse it, must we really fix the seats!"
I found *her* where her gracious garden grows.
She gave me for a poem—just a rose.
Now must my flippant Muse to grave give place:
How thankless is that feast which lacks a Grace!—
He greets our poet-lapses with a smile,
He knows our only vice is lack of style,
Himself a poet, chiming with us well,
Our Doughty Chaplain, our sweet-noted Bell.

Well, life is short, though poet talk be long.
No poet I who here review your song;
So, ere the poser's mood becomes a pest,
Let's ring the curtain on the rambling jest.

HENRY SIMPSON

STUDIES & APPRECIATIONS

CHRONICLES

REVIEWS

A LIST OF RECENT BOOKS [ANNOTATED]

EMILE VERHAEREN: AN APPRECIATION

SAINT-AMAND, the birthplace of Emile Verhaeren, lies near the mouth of the Scheldt in the fertile plain of Flanders. It would seem as if the poet had assimilated to himself this land of wide horizons, of great gulfs of sky. Its breadth and distance have become part of him, and from a childhood full of wonder at the powers and moods of nature, he has grown to a manhood strengthened by that finest of all beliefs, the belief in the limitless possibilities of mankind.

I doubt if it be possible to overrate the influence of the poet's childhood memories on his mature work and ultimate philosophy. He spent his youth in a country where, year in year out, is played in all its force the elemental drama of nature. The moods of every season became ingrained in him, and in his poems to-day the world may experience the same thrill, the same awe that the boy Verhaeren felt at the joy and sorrow of that Flemish plain.

As a child he would lie in bed and listen while the great tempests from the North Sea came roaring over the fields and huddled villages, beating their music into his brain, filling his blood with their blind and splendid strength. As a man, forty years later, he writes of "Vents de Tempêtes":

Un poing d'effroi tord les villages;
Les hauts clochers, dans les lointains,
Envoient l'écho de leurs tocsins
Bondir de plage en plage.

As a child, the morning after one of these gales, he would run out into the sullen, uneasy daylight and watch the racing clouds, the sudden glint of sunshine, the weary trees still writhing after their buffeting of the night, and hear, far to the southward, the mutter of the distant storm vanished beyond the edge of that sad, tormented plain. As a man he writes of the far-flung clamour of the winds "qui se querellent, de loin en loin, à l'infini"; of the haunted menace of November:

Voici les vents, les saints, les morts
Et la procession profonde
Des arbres fous et des branchages tords
Qui voyagent de l'un à l'autre bout du monde.

Voici les grand'routes comme des croix
 A l'infini parmi les plaines,
 Les grand'routes et puis leurs croix lointaines
 A l'infini sur les vallons et dans les bois!

(*Les Vignes de ma Muraille.*)

As a child, again, he would walk the empty streets of some little gabled town, while the quiet rain filled the air with its whispers, dripping from eaves and ledges, making little pools among the cobble-stones. He would rove the plain in springtime feeling the bursting life in hedgerow and ploughland. He would lie among the sand-dunes in the summer sun and bathe in the royal waters of the Scheldt. And all these moods of nature he has sung as no one else has sung them, with the fierce delight of intimate worship :

Longue, comme les fils sans fin, la longue pluie
 Interminablement, à travers le jour gris,
 Ligne les carreaux verts avec ses long fils gris,
 Infiniment, la pluie
 La longue pluie,
 La pluie.

(*Les Villages Illusoires.*)

Or again :

Au long des cours, des impasses et des venelles
 Des vieux quartiers retraits,
 La pluie
 Semble à jamais
 Chez elle.

(*Les Villes à Pignons.*)

But the mere multiplication of quotations is no way to earn for Verhaeren new admirers, because anyone who may, after reading these pages, feel an impulse to study the poet in his books, will find there whatever I could quote and place it according to his own perspective. The majority of the poems dealing with Verhaeren's native land are contained in the five books of the series *Toute la Flandre*. The first poem in the first book of the series (*Les Tendresses Premières*) is almost an epitome of the whole. It is a rhythmic autobiography, beginning :

... les souvenirs chauffent mon sang
 Et pénètrent mes moelles ...
 Je me souviens du village près de l'Escaut,
 D'où l'on voyait les grands bateaux
 Passer, ainsi qu'un rêve empanaché de vent
 Et merveilleux de voiles,
 Le soir en cortège sous les étoiles.

The subsequent verses describe the garden, the neighbouring factory (belonging to his uncle), his parents and relations, his animals; and the poem culminates in a song of praise and love for Flanders. This pride in his country permeates these five books; and every summer, as the years go by, he visits this beloved land communing with the mighty ghosts of her past history, moving among the peasant men and women, or with the grim, silent fishermen watching the grey sea rolling tirelessly against the desolation of "La Guirlande des Dunes."

This series of books comprises those poems of Verhaeren which are most beloved by his countrymen and least admired by foreigners. That they glorify Flanders is reason enough for their fame among the Flemish, and also for their comparative neglect by the French. Verhaeren is not one of the many gods of literary France, because only when he is entirely philosophic is he really in sympathy with French ideals. He is too tempestuous, too illogical—with the unheeding illogicality of nature—to appeal to the Gallic sense. The French, neither in literature nor painting, have yet grappled successfully with Nature. Corot could not refrain from obvious lyricism, from becoming a slave to twilight. Only Cézanne and perhaps Courbet seem to have felt the stark basis of landscape, and the former was thwarted by lack of skill in externalising his impressions while the latter never threw off entirely the fetters of conventional composition. In poetry the names of Hugo and Jammes suggest themselves. Of Hugo I shall speak in a minute, while Francis Jammes, for all his charm, can never seriously be pitted against Verhaeren as a poet of nature. The Fleming is partly German, and therefore nearer the English, and one cannot help feeling the similarity between Verhaeren's love of wind and sunshine and the pantheism of Wordsworth or the painting of Constable. Indeed Constable seems to suggest an example of what I mean. Consider one of those wonderful cloud-studies of his—a windy sky piled high with great white clouds, and at the bottom of the picture a mere strip of sun-flecked field. Then read Verhaeren's poem "Les Beaux Nuages":

Avec ton ciel de nacre et d'ambre
 Tu rehausses les champs, les prés et les villages,
 O mois des beaux nuages
 Septembre!

• • • • •
 L'air vibre ; et l'on entend la cadence des ailes
 Passer, en vols nombreux, sur les blanches maisons ;

Et près du bois, là-bas, les cueilleuses d'airelles
Vers leur rouge récolte inclinent leur chanson.

• • • • •
Et Septembre, là-haut,
Avec son ciel de nacre et d'or voyage,
Et suspend sur les prés, les champs et les hameaux,
Les blocs étincelants de ses plus beaux nuages.

(*Les Plaines.*)

A further comparison between this and, say, Baudelaire's prose poem "Les Nuages" will reveal an essential difference of attitude. Similarly Verhaeren sees in autumn either the fragrant memories of a glowing summer or the menace of wind and frost; that is to say the idea of continuity, of a future pregnant with possibility, never leaves him. Verlaine, Merrill, Moréas, or any other *paysagiste* of French symbolist generation, will sing of the plaintive beauty of decay rejoicing in the quiet music of the dying year, taking an isolated sensuous delight in nature's melancholy, but giving no thought to the place of autumn in the endless cycle of seasons, feeling no sorrow that another summer has faded into mist.* And so I think that those people who blame Verhaeren for rhetoric and grandiloquence (and they are not only Frenchmen) make the mistake of judging him by "symboliste" standards. There is no denying that to pass, for instance, from Retté's "Grand vent" (*Campagne Première*) to any of Verhaeren's poems on wind, is to pass out from the study of the philosopher on to a storm-swept moor. The Frenchman sees in the wind a disturber of nature, an angry intruder bringing war from distant lands, not Nature's own anger, following her gentleness, as the righteous anger of a man succeeds his friendship. The critic, then, who approaches from this point of view, is forced to fall back on Victor Hugo for his parallel, and Hugo to the "symboliste" is anathema. Hugo is indeed always outside nature. Even giving him the credit that is his due—and this is rarely done just at present—one cannot but feel that he sees in Nature a pageant, like any other mighty spectacle, and that he tells of her triumphant colouring as a looker-on would describe the uniforms and martial music of a procession.† Verhaeren feels himself a child of the wind and rain and sun-

* This distinction between Verhaeren and the French *Symbolistes* holds good in other spheres than that of landscape. The ultra-subjectivity of the latter's love-poems, which celebrate one night of passion, one hour even, leave unexpressed the vital importance of sex to sex in the continuance of the race, are devoid entirely of that natural desire of male for female which gives Verhaeren's frankness the purity of wind and rain.

† Tancrède de Visan in his *L'Attitude du Lyrisme contemporain* gives a skilful study of Verhaeren, which shows more sympathy than is usually found in French criticism. Of the poet's

shine ; their moods are his moods, and as Wordsworth endowed his mountains with motive and idea, so the Flemish poet feels Nature has reasons for her anger or delight.

The rhetorician loses the power to be simple. The pageant-seeker can see no beauty in quiet colouring. But Verhaeren has met neither of these fates. His poetry can be more tempestuous, and also more profoundly calm, than that of any other modern writer. He can be tender as only great strength is tender. There is always dignity in his passion, even when there is most fire. Finally he has reached the point when passion has become enduring.

Some consideration of the love-poems shall close this slight tribute to a noble poet. They are contained in three books—*Les Heures Claires*, *Les Heures d'Après-midi*, and *Les Heures du Soir*, and when I read them I feel that perhaps these three books are the greatest he has written. "A celle qui vit à mes côtes" he dedicates these tremendous poems of love. He is the ideal lover, the man who has passed from the bewildered awakening of passion, through the triumph of conquest, to the quiet devotion and confidence that lasts for ever. He writes none of the forlorn and plaintive music of the self-pitying, hopeless swain. He fights his battle in silence, wins the woman he wants, and then with all thankfulness and all humility sings his love for her :

J'étais si lourd, j'étais si las,
J'étais si vieux de méfiance,
J'étais si lourd, j'étais si las
Du vain chemin de tous mes pas,

Je méritais si peu la merveilleuse joie
De voir tes pieds illuminer ma voie,
Que j'en reste tremblant encore, et presque en pleurs
Et humble à tout jamais en face du bonheur.

• • • • •
L'amour, oh ! qu'il soit la clairvoyance
Unique et l'unique raison du cœur,
A nous, dont le plus fol bonheur
Est d'être fous de confiance.

(*Les Heures Claires.*)

connection with *symbolisme* M. de Visan says : " Verhaeren stands as the leader of the former of the two great movements springing from Victor Hugo, which ended, one in the lyricism *from within*, the lyricism of *immanence*, and the other, personified in Moréas, in the poetry of classicism. " He says further, when comparing Hugo and Verhaeren, that while the former sometimes loses himself in mere repetition of sounding words, the latter never allows eloquence or moral exhortation to swing his poetry over the boundaries of force into the gulf of bathos.

In *Les Heures d'Après-midi* sounds a gentler note, a note of greater peace, after fifteen years' love and confidence. The mystery has partly gone, but no disillusionment has come in its place :

Je ne vois plus ta bouche et tes grands yeux
Luire, comme un matin de fête,
Ni, lentement, se reposer ta tête
Dans le jardin massif et noir de tes cheveux.

Tes mains chères qui demeurent si douces
Ne viennent plus comme autrefois
Avec de la lumière au bout des doigts
Me caresser le front, comme une aube les mousses.

• • • • •

Mais, néanmoins, mon cœur ferme et fervent te dit :
Que m'importent les deuils mornes et engourdis,
Puisque je sais que rien au monde
Ne troublera jamais notre être exalté
Et que notre âme est trop profonde
Pour que l'amour dépende encore de la beauté.

Finally, the poems of *Les Heures du Soir*—perhaps the most beautiful book of the three—show us the poet, a little weary after a life of crowded effort, now lingering in the garden among the flowers, now watching the flames on winter evenings, but with a heart still on fire with passionate memories.

Mets ta chaise près de la mienne
Et tends les mains vers le foyer
Pour que je voie entre tes doigts
La flamme ancienne
Flamboyer ;
Et regarde le feu
Tranquillement, avec tes yeux
Qui n'ont peur d'aucune lumière
Pour qu'ils me soient encor plus francs
Quand un rayon rapide et fulgurant
Jusques au fond de toi les frappe et les éclaire.

• • • • •

Comme je t'aime alors, ma claire bien-aimée,
Dans ta chair accueillante et pâmée,
Qui m'entoure à son tour et me fond dans sa joie !
Tout me devient plus cher, et ta bouche et tes bras
Et tes seins bienveillants où mon pauvre front las
Après l'instant de plaisir fou que tu m'octroies
Tranquillement, près de ton cœur reposera.

There is one more short poem that I should like to quote in full, before leaving the poet in the gathering twilight of his perfect love-story :

Avec mes vieilles mains de ton front rapprochées
J'écarte tes cheveux et je baise, ce soir,
Pendant ton bref sommeil au bord de l'âtre noir
La ferveur de tes yeux sous tes longs cils cachée.

Oh ! la bonne tendresse en cette fin de jour !
Mes yeux suivent les ans dont l'existence est faite
Et tout à coup ta vie y paraît si parfaite
Qu'un émouvant respect attendrit mon amour.

Et comme au temps où tu m'étais la fiancée,
L'ardeur me vient encor de tomber à genoux
Et de toucher la place où bat ton cœur si doux
Avec les doigts aussi chastes que mes pensées.

Verhaeren's metrical methods are not my concern here, but it is worth noting that many of his love-poems are written in a regular metre, and not in the form of *vers libre* he has made so peculiarly his own. In this fact one sees a significant impulse. His love-story is the one tranquil and ordered element in a life of mental stress. The torrential quality of his other poetry arises from the ardour and fullness of his existence. Moods, impressions, enthusiasms have swept over him unceasingly. But through the turmoil of the whole runs this golden thread of devotion to the woman he loves. In some ways the three books just discussed stand somewhat apart from the rest of his work. But they are none the less the corner-stone of the fabric of his tremendous poetry.

As Belgium is a synthesis of Europe, so Verhaeren is a synthesis of modern art. His country contains every aspect of civilisation : rolling farmlands, quiet, cloistered monasteries, thunderous railway stations, belching factories. In Verhaeren, similarly, is the essence of every art ; he belongs to every school and to no school. It is impossible to read this superb poetry without feeling the awe of being in the presence of one of the great poets of the world. Verhaeren's work is exhausting to the reader. It holds his entire being, it sweeps him away with the turbulence of its power, it awes him with its majesty, it soothes him with its tenderness. Like life, it must be lived, because it is life. Much is said nowadays about the necessity for art being in touch with life. Contemporary art has rejected the negative self-seclusion of the generation that is passing away. She has thrown herself into every

modern activity, she paints factories and chimney-stacks, she describes men not as they ought to be, nor as they like to be considered, but as they are. The time is coming when Verhaeren will be hailed as the prophet of 'art for life's sake,' for no man has loved life as he has loved it, no man has wrenched from existence such variegated masses of joy and sorrow.

He has stood on the hill-top in the carnival of wind and sunshine; he has seen hunger and dirt and cruelty; he has known peace and love. No man can wish for a better life than this, so that, his battles done, he may sit by the fire with his soul at rest, while the storm weeps at the windows.

MICHAEL T. H. SADLER

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The following books by Verhaeren are still in circulation :

1. *Poèmes*, in 3 volumes. 3.50 each.

Vol. i. contains : *Les Flamandes* ; *Les Moines* ; *Les Bords de la Coute*.

Vol. ii. contains : *Les Soirs* ; *Les Débâcles* ; *Les Flambeaux Noirs*.

Vol. iii. contains : *Les Villages Illusoires* ; *Les Apparus dans mes Chemins* ; *Les Vignes de ma Muraille*.

[*Mercur de France*.]

Les Heures Claires and *Les Heures d'Après-midi*. 3.50.

La Multiple Splendeur. 3.50.

Les Forces Tumultueuses. 3.50.

Les Rhythmes Souverains. 3.50.

Deux Drames (Le Cloître, Les Aubes). 3.50.

[*Mercur de France*.]

Œuvres de Emile Verhaeren (contains : *Les Campagnes Hallucinées* ; *Les Villes Tentaculaires* ; *Les Douze Mois* ; *Les Visages de la Vie*—all largely rewritten). 7.0.

[*Mercur de France*.]

2. *Les Plaines*, Vol. v. of *Toute la Flandre*. 5.0. The four previous volumes are out of print.

[Brussels : *Deman*.]

3. *Les Heures du Soir*. 20 marks. (This may be out of print now—the edition was a small one.)

[Leipzig : *Insel Verlag*.]

4. *Les Blès Mouvants*. 7.50. Ed. of 1,000 copies.

[Paris : *Crès*.]

THOMAS HARDY OF DORCHESTER

THERE may be as many reasons for writing verse as for drinking, but it would be interesting to know how certain men, and Mr Hardy in particular, took to verse and kept to it ; how so calm-sighted a man, who can write prose, should come to put in print rhymes like this :

Oh that far-famed spot by Lodi
Where Napoleon clove his way
To his fame, where like a god he
Bent the nations to his sway . . .

and like this :

So loudly swell their shrieks as to be heard above the roar of guns and
the wailful wind,
Giving in one brief cry their last wild word in that mock life through
which they have harlequined.

It is possible sometimes to wonder if he is poking fun at verse by first making it so unwontedly substantial, then adding a considerable amount of rhyme, alliteration, and assonance, as frills. He never sacrifices anything to rhyme, except appearances, while he owes to it a richness and closeness that neither his nor other men's prose possesses.

There is something rustic and old-fashioned in Mr Hardy's use of verse, as there is in his language when he speaks of a lover telling "the zephyrs many a tender vow." When he writes one of his sonnets that are like the *précis* of love-letters it is as if he set out to honour his feelings by giving them the form which, in fact, he honours in the use. The result is that a certain awkwardness is almost as constant in his work as truth is. Now it is the awkwardness of unfamiliar and imperfectly harmonious words, which is familiar to critics of his prose ; now it is the awkwardness of making many rhymes obtrusive and his stanza forms often arbitrary ; now the awkwardness of saying—

And still sadly onward I followed
That Highway the Icen. . . .

Re-reading all Mr Hardy's poetry in this new edition I notice, and not

* *Wessex Poems*, and *Poems Past and Present*, 2s. 6d. net. *The Dynasts* and *Time's Laughing-stocks*, vols. xix. and xx. in Wessex edition : 2 vols., 7s. 6d. net each. (London, Macmillan & Co.)

only in the form, something which I hope I may with respect call rustic. It enables him to mingle unexpected elements, so that, thinking in 1867 of the year 1967, he not only speaks of the new century having "new minds, new modes, new fools, new wise,"—but concludes :

For I would only ask thereof
That thy worm should be my worm, Love !

It is as antique as Donne's "Flea." The same rusticity manifests itself at other times as Elizabethanism, and he is something of a "liberal shepherd" in his willingness to give things their grosser names or to hint at them. He has a real taste for such comparisons as that made by the French officer looking at the English fleet at Trafalgar :

Their overcrowded sails
Bulge like blown bladders in a tripeman's shop
The market-morning after slaughter-day !

Then how those drawings of his—the spectacles and the landscape, for example, following "In a Eweleaze near Weatherbury,"—remind us of a seventeenth-century book of emblems ! Sometimes his excuse is that he is impersonating a man of an earlier age, as in "The Sergeant's Song" :

When husbands with their wives agree,
And maids won't wed from modesty ;
Then Little Boney he'll pounce down,
And march his men on London town !
 Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum,
 Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lay !

This is a descendant of the rustic ballad-maker. An unexpected rusticity is his reference to Queen Victoria in 1901 as "the norm of every royal-reckoned attribute." Another form is his use of "bride-ale" for bridal, and of phrases like "lightsome of blee," and of all the gross alliteration in "The Sick God." Another is his obsession by Roman remains on the road near his home "where legions had wayfared" and his mother had guided his infant steps. And how often is he delighted to represent a peasant's view, a peasant's contribution to the irony of things ! a capital instance being the story of the man who killed Grouchy to save his farm, and so lost Napoleon the battle of Waterloo.

With this rusticity, if it be that, I cannot help connecting that most tyrannous obsession of the blindness of fate, the carelessness of nature, and the insignificance of man, twitched hither and thither by the Immanent Will

crawling in multitudes like caterpillars. Over and over again, from the beginning up to "The Dynasts," he is amplifying the words of God :

"My labours—logicless—
You may explain ; not I : "

and (referring to the Earth):

"It lost my interest from the first . . ."

"Sportsman Time" and "those purblind Doomsters" are characteristic phrases. Of birth he utters many things to be summed up at the end of a death-bed poem :

We see by littles now the deft achievement
Whereby she has escaped the wrongers all,
In view of which our momentary bereavement
Outshapes but small.

As gravely he descends to the ludicrous extreme of making a girl planting pine-trees sing :

It will sigh in the morning,
Will sigh at noon,
At the winter's warning,
In wafts of June ;
Grieving that never
Kind Fate decreed
It could not ever
Remain a seed,
And shun the welter
Of things without,
Unneeding shelter
From storm and drought . . .

and of putting into the mouths of field and flock and tree—because while he gazed on them at dawn they looked like chastened children sitting silent in a school—the question :

Has some Vast Imbecility,
Mighty to build and blend,
But impotent to tend,
Framed us in jest, and left us now to hazardry ?

Napoleon, in "The Dynasts," asks the same question, "Why am I here ?" and answers it :

By laws imposed on me inexorably !
History makes use of me to weave her web.

Twentieth-century superstition can no further go than in that enormous poem, which is astonishing in many ways, not least in being readable. I call it superstition because by rustic imagination a truth, or a genuine attempt

at truth, has been turned into an obsession so powerful that only a very great talent could have rescued anything from its weight. A hundred years earlier Mr Hardy would not have been reading "that moderate man, Voltaire," but inventing an heretical creed. All these Spirits of the Years, and of the Pities, Spirits sinister and ironic, Rumours and Recording Angels, would not then have been "contrivances of the fancy merely," and the ghosts "on the wainscot" and elsewhere in so many of his poems would have been real ghosts, and not poetic fictions.

Even his use of irony verges on the superstitious. Artistically, at least in the shorter poems, it may be sound, and is certainly effective, as in the poem where an old man laments at finding that his wife is to be in the same wing of the workhouse instead of setting him "free of this forty years' chain." But the frequent use of it changes the reader's smile into a laugh at the perversity.

Mr Hardy must have discovered the blindness of fate, the indifference of nature, and the irony of life, before he met them in books. They have been brooded over in solitude until they afflict him as the sinfulness of man afflicts a Puritan. The skull and crossbones, Death the scythed skeleton, and the hour-glass, have been real to him. Very real, too, is Mother Earth mourning:

I had not proposed me a creature
(She sighed) so excelling
All else of my kingdom in compass
And brightness of brain
As to read my defects with a god-glance.

A little step from this takes us to "The Lonely God," but whereas Mr Stephens's poem seems a wanton fancy, Mr Hardy's is ghastly serious.

If I were told that Mr Hardy had spent his days in a woodland hermitage, though I should not believe the story, I should suspect that it was founded on fact. That the hut contained a considerable library I should be certain, and how real the books have been to him may be learnt from the poems on Gibbon, on Shelley's lark, and on the Pyramid of Cestius. The New Testament has also been real to him, or the dead soldier's phantom would not ask :

I would know
By whom and when the All-earth-gladdening Law
Of Peace, brought in by that Man Crucified,
Was ruled to be inept, and set aside ?
And what of logic or of truth appears
In tacking "Anno Domini" to the years ?

The woodland, and the country in general, have given Mr Hardy some of his consolations. One, at least, of these is almost superstitious. I mean the belief that "the longlegs, the moth, and the dumbledore" know "earth-secrets" that he knows not. In "The Darkling Thrush" it is to be found in another stage, the bird's song in winter making him think that it knew of "some blessed hope" of which he was unaware. Also, in comparison with the town, the country is paradise, for he speaks of the Holiday Fund for City Children as temporarily "changing their urban murk to paradise." Country life, especially love and death in the country, he has handled with a combination of power and exactness perhaps beyond any other of our poets, and for countrywomen I should give the palm to his Julie-Jane.

His other consolations are beauty, truth, and antiquity. Like the man "In a Eweleaze near Weatherbury," I think he would say :

Still, I'd go the world with Beauty,
I would laugh with her and sing,
I would shun divinest duty
To resume her worshipping.

His sense of truth is exquisite and strong : even in the lines for the Children's Holiday Fund he spoke of "scenes which at least ensure some palliative for ill they cannot cure," and I cannot imagine him saying, like the lover in "The Dawn after the Dance" :

Be candid would I willingly, but dawn draws on so chillingly
As to render further cheerlessness intolerable now.

As for antiquity, he refuses an invitation to the United States with a confession that, in spite of all, he liked "woning in these ancient lands," and he has given a poem to a man for refusing to help dismantle a beautiful old house. How much these things are to him—beauty, truth, and antiquity—may be guessed from the opening of "Let me enjoy (minor key)" :

Let me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight.

They are mightier than his superstitions.

EDWARD THOMAS

JOHN DONNE

PRAISE is the prerogative of the good. And those who are wise as well as good spend all their waking hours, it is well known, in laudation. In general they praise beauty, the sun, colour, virtue, and the rest of the doxology; in the intervals more particular things. Charing Cross Bridge by night, the dancing of Miss Ethel Levey, the Lucretian hexameter, the beer at an inn in Royston I will not advertise, the sausages at another inn above Princes Risborough, and the Clarendon Press editions of the English poets. But the beer and the sausages will change, and Miss Levey one day will die, and Charing Cross Bridge will fall; so the Clarendon Press books will be the only thing our evil generation may show to the cursory eyes of posterity, to prove it was not wholly bad. They are lovely things, these books; beautiful in arrangement, size, and type; filled with good stuff to read; and prepared with the exact amount of scholarship that shall escape pedantry and yet rise far above dilettantism. These two volumes of Donne crown the series.* To open them is to make even a scholar love poetry, even a poet adore scholarship. Mr Grierson's services to the text cannot be over-praised. Any fool can write criticism, but it takes a man who understands poetry rarely to restore a faulty text to perfection. Other editors of Donne will come, who will perhaps be able to show more clearly the two or more different original versions of some of the poems. That is all they will find to do. The commentary is a little less complete than the work on the text, but almost equally rich a gift. Donne is the one poet who demands a commentary, not for allusions, but, sometimes, for his entire train of thought. And in the same way he is the one poet who requires a perfect text, for (it is a minor merit) all his lines always "mean" something. Both text and commentary are prepared for us by Mr Grierson, with a result which must have demanded an extraordinary amount of work, and a rarely patient and unlapsing judgment. Mr Grierson is very good in the one point where nearly all modern English literary scholarship is mad and bad enough to shock the most imbecile lawyer: in knowledge of the laws of evidence. Mr Grierson has

* *Donne's Poetical Works*. Edited by H. J. C. Grierson. Vol. I. Text and Appendixes. Vol. II. Introduction and Commentary. (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 18s. net.)

both our praise and our gratitude. Donne was labelled, by Johnson, a "metaphysical" poet; and the term has been repeated ever since, to the great confusion of critics. Mr Grierson attempts to believe that it means erudite, and that erudition is one of the remarkable and eponymous characteristics of Donne's poetry. It rested on erudition, no doubt, as Mr Grierson has valuably shown; but it was not so especially erudite—not so erudite as the writings of Ben Jonson, a far less "metaphysical" poet. But the continual use of this phrase may have aimed vaguely at a most important feature there is in Donne's poetry. He is the most *intellectual* poet in English; and his intellectualism had, even, sometimes, a tendency to the abstract. But to be an intellectual poet does not mean that one writes about intellectual things. The pageant of the outer world of matter and the mid-region world of the passions came to Donne through the brain. The whole composition of the man was made up of brain, soul, and heart in a different proportion from the ordinary prescription. This does not mean that he felt less keenly than others; but when passion shook him, and his being ached for utterance, to relieve the stress, expression came through the intellect. Under the storm of emotion, it is common to seek for relief by twisting some strong stuff. Donne, as Coleridge said, turns intellectual pokers into love-knots. An ordinary poet, whose feelings find far stronger expression than a common man's, but an expression according to the same prescription, praises his mistress with some common idea, intensely felt:

Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!

Donne, equally moved and equally sincere, would compare her to a perfectly equilateral triangle, or to the solar system. His intellect must find satisfaction. If a normal poet—it is not very probable—in thinking of his mistress being ill with a fever, had suggested to him the simile of these fevers soon passing and dying away in her, just as shooting stars consume and vanish in the vastness and purity of the sky, he would have tried to bring the force of his thought home by sharpening and beautifying the imagined vision. He might have approached it on the lines of:

Through the serene wide dark of you
They trail their transient gold, and die.

Donne feels only the idea. He does not try to visualise it. He never visualises, or suggests that he has any pleasure in looking at things. His poems might

all have been written by a blind man in a world of blind men. In "The Fever" he gives you the thought thus :

These burning fits but meteors be,
Whose matter in thee is soon spent.
Thy beauty, and all parts, which are thee,
Are unchangeable firmament.

The mediation of the senses is spurned. Brain does all.

And as Donne saw everything through his intellect, it follows, in some degree, that he could see everything humorously. He could see it the other way, too. But humour was always at his command. It was part of his realism ; especially in the bulk of his work, his poems dealing with love. There is no true lover but has sometimes laughed at his mistress, and often at himself. But you would not guess that from the love-songs of many poets. Their poems run the risk of looking a little flat. They are unreal by the side of Donne. For while his passion enabled him to see the face of love, his humour allowed him to look at it from the other side. So we behold his affairs in the round.

But it must not appear that his humour, or his wit, and his passion, alternated. The other two are his passion's handmaids. It should not be forgotten that Donne was one of the first great English satirists, and the most typical and prominent figure of a satirical age. Satire comes with the Bible of truth in one hand and the sword of laughter in the other. Donne was true to the reality of his own heart. Sometimes you hear the confident laughter of lovers who have found their love :

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we loved ? were we not weaned till then ?
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly ?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den ?

and there is the bitterer mirth of the famous—

For God's sake, hold your tongue, and let me love.

He could combine either the light or the grave aspects of love with this lack of solemnity that does but heighten the sharpness of the seriousness. His colloquialism helped him. It has been the repeated endeavour of half the great English poets to bring the language of poetry, and the accent and rhythm of poetry, nearer to those of the intensest moments of common

speech. To attempt this was especially the mark of many of the greatest of the Elizabethans. Shakespeare's "Prithee, undo this button!" finds its lyrical counterpart in several of Donne's poems. Yet he did not confine his effects to laughter and slang. He could curiously wed fantastic imagination with the most grave and lofty music of poetry; as in the great poem where he compares his wife to the stationary leg of a compass, himself to the voyaging one:

And though it in the centre fit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like the other foot, obliquely run:
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

For indeed, while the quality of his imagination was unique and astonishing, he expressed it most normally as a great poet, with all the significance and beauty that English metre and poetry can give:

O more than moon,
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere!

and—

Thou art not soft, and clear, and straight, and fair,
As down, as stars, cedars, and lilies are;
But thy right hand, and cheek, and eye, only
Are like thy other hand, and cheek, and eye—

contain as much inexplicable loveliness and strangeness as any of the writings of the Romantics. The mere technique of his poetry has been imitated and followed by many of all the poets who followed him and loved him, from Dryden to Swinburne. It is a good thing that he is slowly spreading from that select band of readers to a wider public. This edition has opportunely appeared at the time of the spreading of his fame. It is fitting he should be read in an age when poetry is beginning to go back from nature, romance, the great world, and the other fine hunting-places of the Romantics, by devious ways and long *ambages*, to that wider home which Donne knew better than any of the great English poets, the human heart. "The heart's a wonder."

RUPERT BROOKE

THE GREEK GENIUS

II *

AMONGST all the traits of their literature which Mr Livingston selects for illustration he does not select that Greek trait of "nobility" on which Matthew Arnold in his essay *On Translating Homer* insists so strongly. But this book was already in the press when the reading public, together with some of our most respectable literary reviews and professors of literature, so clearly betrayed the modern standard of literary taste in their enthusiasm for Mr Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy*, or he would have realised that Matthew Arnold's work is by no means done. It may be thought, perhaps, that when I look for the regeneration of our literature by "a spiritual inroad of the barbarians" this poem should precisely realise my expectations. And barbarous enough, in the Greek sense of the word, no doubt it is; for it is foreign in almost every possible respect to the Greek ideal; and for this reason, and because its popularity has been sanctioned by such high authorities, a trial of this poem by the Greek standard, however apparently invidious, is exactly suited to the purpose of this essay. For in our sense of the word there is no barbaric virtue in Mr Masefield's poem just because it is so far from primitive. We know very well—I know it from my own experience of the Zulus and of certain continental peasants, everybody knows it of the North American Indians, Montaigne and Rousseau knew it generally of the "noble savage," Mr Synge knew it of the peasants of the Arran Islands—that an almost invariable characteristic of primitive man is that native dignity and nobility which develops under favourable conditions into the nobility and dignity of Homer and the Greek poets through stages, almost equally noble, which are represented by the Norse Sagas or the religious chants of the American Indians, ancient and modern. And how far is this primitive nobility from the spirit of Mr Masefield's stirring verse?—

"You closhy put." "You bloody liar."

"This is my field." "This is my wire."

"I'm ruler here." "You ain't." "I am."

"I'll fight you for it." "Right, by damn."

We need not compare this with Homer's barbaric realism; with such

* The first part of this article appeared in the March number of POETRY AND DRAMA.

verse, for instance, as, "With blood was his hair drenched that was like to the hair of the Graces, and his tresses knit with silver and gold." Let us compare it rather with the purity of the Greek's treatment of similar subject-matter in his least inspired, his most prosaic mood. "What a genial ruffianism," says Mr Livingston, "breathes through the words of Hipponax!—"Take my coat; I will hit Bupalus in the eye, for I am ambidextrous, and I never miss my aim.' And what a healthy thirst is here (as compared, for instance, with Mr Masfield's drinking scenes)?—"We drank out of the decanter, for it had lost its glass; for the boy fell on it and broke it.'"

It is true, of course—and this indeed is my whole point—that Greek poetry is nobler and more dignified than Mr Masfield's mainly because Greek life was nobler and more dignified than that of a modern civilised State. But quite dignified verse has been produced, even quite recently, by our English poets; and Mr Masfield, even in his higher flights, has an unfortunate faculty, however convenient to my present purpose, for flattering everything that is least Greek in the current tendencies and characteristics of the English people. How unintelligible to the Greeks, with their love of freedom, would have been, for instance, these unctuous words of Mr Masfield's parson, on reading which the breasts of a pious Liberal party must glow with honest satisfaction:

To get the whole world out of bed
And washed, and dressed, and warmed, and fed,
To work, and back to bed again,
Believe me, Saul, costs worlds of pain.

And Mr Masfield's hero, who is supposed to show some revolutionary spirit, is actually abashed by this sort of nonsense, and afterwards soon "converted"; and in his conversion, of course, he is even less Greek than in the incredible vulgarity of his riotous living. We are reminded of Nietzsche's exclamation at the climax of his disgust that even "the rabble turns spiritual."

It is refreshing to turn to Mr Livingston's next chapter on Greek "humanism" as an antidote to *The Everlasting Mercy*. All that is new in Mr Masfield's poem is, of course—I will not say its vulgarity—I will say its laudable attempt to popularise the central conception. The central conception of man as, in Byron's fine phrase—

Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar . . .

is as old as St. Paul, as old even as Plato. But, prior to Plato, the Greek was scarcely conscious of this dualism; he only saw, says Mr Livingston, "a unity 'glorious in its action and itself' in which humanity was not distinct from divinity, nor body from soul." Hence, of course, the preoccupation of Greek art with the human form, of the Greek people with athletic recreations, and with its self-directed political life. "Its New Jerusalem was on earth; its ideal was a human paradise." And in the interval between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars this idea was almost attained. "Come," says Aristophanes, "come, ye daughters who bring the rain, come to the splendid land of Athens, and see a country rich in loveliness, rich in men. Here is the majesty of inviolate shrines, here are statues and soaring temples, here are processions, sacred, blessed, and through every season of the year flower-crowned feasts and festivals of gods. Here, as spring advances, comes the glory of the wine-god, and the musical delight of dancing, and the deep-toned melody of the flute."

Consider the Elgin Marbles; consider the wonderful victories of the Persian wars—two in one day in the case of Plataea and Mycale; consider the incident of the Plataean who ran one hundred and twenty-five miles in one day to fetch the sacred fire from Delphi, "and, saluting his fellow-citizens and delivering them the fire, he immediately fell down and a short time after expired"; roll on your lips the names and achievements of Miltiades, and Aristides, and Pericles; and this picture of "the splendid land, rich in loveliness, rich in men," will hardly seem a poet's overstatement. And as for the "flower-crowned feasts and festivals of gods," here is Mr Livingston's account of these, drawn from the available evidence, and, as compared with the known achievements of the Greeks in arts and arms, by no means overdrawn: "The Attic festivals, like those of the Roman Church" (since these were mainly of pagan origin), "joined recreation with religion, and were jovial human holidays. Such, for instance, was the race to Phalerum at the Oscophoria, in which, after the religious ceremonies were over, all the youth of Athens took part, the day ending with a universal picnic on the shores of the bay; such was the dancing on greased skins at the Dionysia, and a sport mentioned by Suidas in which drinkers standing on inflated wine-skins, at a signal from a trumpet, drank for a prize; such were the ceremonies at the Great Panathenaea, to be seen to-day in stone on the walls of the British Museum, though the idealised figures of the Elgin Marbles give us little idea of the gaiety of the real scene. There were boat-

aces, torch-races, foot-races, horse-races, dances of men in full armour, leaping in and out of flying chariots, javelin-throwing from horseback, cock-fighting, musical and gymnastic contests, prizes for manly beauty, recitations from Homer, a speech by a chosen orator of the day, and, finally, the great procession to the Acropolis, in which a sacred ship was drawn through the city, the yellow embroidered robe destined for the statue of Athena Polias blowing out from its mast, and the whole population of Athens, on foot, on horseback, in chariots, following in its train.

“How good is man’s life, the mere living ! how fit to employ
All the heart, and the soul, and the senses, for ever in joy !”

I quote this passage at length, and insist on it as of great importance, because I believe there is no more certain index to the health or decadence of a community than the character of their recreations. This enthusiasm for all kinds of active recreation which, with their other good qualities, the Greeks shared with most primitive peoples, is another example of their pagan identification of soul with body—of what Mr Livingston calls their “humanism”—which is otherwise expressed in Greek art and literature, as in the ruder arts and folk-songs of the peasant races out of which they arose. The change from this love of active recreation to the insatiable appetite of the later Roman, or of the modern, populace for passive amusements, as the mere spectators of shows which are by no means a recreation but a hungry business or a barbarous punishment to the actual performers, is a symptom either of declining vitality or of a total diversion of the vital forces to lucrative purposes under an increasing economic pressure ; and to regard this love of active recreation as one of the sins of the flesh in contrast to the prudence and industry of the money-making, virtuous person, to associate it with law-breaking and gambling and licentious living, as it is regarded and associated (though to some extent under protest, and with would-be spirited hits at the Puritanical audience to whom he mainly appeals) in Mr Masfield’s poem, is a further such symptom ; these, indeed, are two of the last and worst symptoms, whilst the total loss of popular art is another, of that decadence which begins, according to Nietzsche and to Mr Livingston, with Euripides and Socrates and Plato.

Great men are proverbially in advance of their age, which means, perhaps, that they are sensitive to changes as imperceptible to their contemporaries as they would be, but for the reflected light of future events, to the most

learned historian ; in so far, that is to say, as they are children of their age they are an effect which not only antedates all other effects, but, if the cause can be assigned, apparently antedates the cause. Certainly, in an age which produced Alcibiades as well as Plato, it is a very slightly falling trajectory whose curve descends at last to the Roman amphitheatre, and, after the glorious ricochet of the Middle Ages, to the football fields, and music-halls, and picture palaces of modern England. The decline of Greek art and literature in the fourth century would seem, in the judgment of many critics, almost equally slight ; and it is, certainly not in the literary quality of his work, but in Plato's mystical and anti-democratical tendencies, in his contempt for the body and his general distrust of human nature, that the decadence of Greece, if we are to regard as decadent this falling off from the old Hellenic ideal, most plainly appears.

It appears most plainly in Plato, but in Euripides and Thucydides there are symptoms of the coming change. This change, perhaps wisely without much attempt at explanation, Mr Livingston most admirably describes in his chapter on " The Fifth Century, and After " ; and my space only permits me to describe it here by implication. But, on the hypothesis I have already advanced that intellectual power is developed by man's dealing as a free agent with material things, and spiritual power by the dealings of material things with man, this accession of spiritual power to Greece admits of an explanation which may be hazarded by the amateur even though the expert refrains. Nietzsche, who rejected Plato, was nevertheless, like most great men, an immense admirer of Thucydides ; but even in Thucydides, as compared with Herodotus, there are symptoms of the change which Mr Livingston illustrates in comparing Euripides with Homer. And if we recall the terrible trials and tragedies through which Athens passed during the youth of Plato, and whilst Thucydides was composing his great work, the growing seriousness of Greece as it is evinced by her great writers, her increasing tendency to a moral tone, the sentimentality which always accompanies the growing knowledge of good and evil, and which degenerates later into mere phrase-making or pretty marble cutting, may be easily, though I believe it is not usually, correlated with these stupendous events. For men who had seen the unspeakable horrors of the plague, and the overwhelming disaster to the Sicilian Expedition ; for men who had heard the sound of agonised wailing from the Piræus to the Acropolis which greeted the news of the total loss of the fleet upon which Athens had so boldly

staked her life—lost through the over-confidence of her generals almost without a blow ; for men who had suffered the months of reduction, and witnessed the deaths of hundreds of their fellow citizens by slow famine ; who had seen the triumphant entry of Lysander and the razing of the Long Walls ; for Socrates before he drank the hemlock—for Thucydides, heart-broken, perhaps, before his work was finished—for Plato almost before it was begun—we may well believe it literally true that the bitterness of death was past.

Mr Livingston speaks of what he calls " the poetry of failure " as typically modern (or Roman) and non-Hellenic ; but it is, naturally enough, between the historian of the Persian and the historian of the Peloponnesian Wars that the watershed lies which divides the true Hellenic from the modern world. Thucydides hardens his heart against the new outlook and the new conditions, but that which distinguishes Herodotus, the gaiety, the charming simplicity, what Mr Chesterton, in speaking of our own great scientists, so finely calls " the eerie innocence " of the intellect, is absent from his pages. He has not begun, with Plato, to seek for spiritual consolations and alternatives, to reject the principles of freedom and democracy, to forge for mankind the chains of the moralist, to see the grapes of the flesh as sour ; but in every perfect sentence he is grimly securing immortality for the greatness that remains to Athens, or hinting deftly at the causes of her sure decay. Herodotus is the happy eulogist who glories naïvely in the love of her citizens for their own freedom, and their determination to maintain it ; Thucydides the skilful physician, who, seeing how that freedom is threatened, puts it with well-concealed irony into the mouth of supplicants for her favour that she is the champion rather of the oppressed than of the oppressor. Herodotus tells dreadful tales of the treatment of their slaves by the Scythian nomads, or of her rival by the wife of Xerxes, in a sheerly scientific spirit, and is almost bracing in his apparent indifference to the sufferings which he has to describe. Thucydides, for all his stoicism, is clearly shocked by the fate of Mycalessus, and relieved by that picturesque reversal of the death-sentence to Mitylene. In Thucydides, as in Vergil, there is " the sense of tears in human things " which is absent from Herodotus because it was induced by misfortunes to Athens which he just did not live to see, and to point out ways of escape from which, whether spiritual or political, is the aim of Plato.

Mr Livingston puts the following criticism of pure Hellenism into the

mouth of an imaginary opponent, and these words may well describe the reaction of temperament to condition, the accommodation of the "life force" to adverse circumstances, which is illustrated on such a splendid scale in Plato's philosophy. "If we were unageing and immortal all our days, if there were no such things as ill-health or failure, then we might live in this blaze of white light, which befits the deities of Olympus and an Olympian humanity; but, as it is, let us turn to Greece when we are elated and triumphant, but keep for our hours of depression and disappointment the twilight world of sentiment, where irrevocable defeat is in imagination retrieved and the paths again lie open, which illness, folly, sin, or want of parts have finally closed, where failure takes the form of success, and death itself is transmuted into something rich and strange."

This "birth of tragedy," the birth of the non-Hellenic spirit, was due, I say, to the misfortunes of Athens; but the question arises, were they pure and undeserved misfortunes? I will not suggest with Mr Zimmern, the economist (though there is scarcely a point from which I wish to differ in his admirable and delightful work), that the dreadful severity of the plague was due to insanitary conditions, and that some at least of the money spent on decorating the Acropolis would have been better spent on drains and pure water supplies. I believe rather with Prof Flinders Petrie, though I do not hail it with his complaisance, that conscientious cleanliness is a symptom of the mechanical age; I believe that the sanitary engineer is one of the artist's worst enemies, and that the postponement of hygiene to art by Pericles constitutes almost his first claim to our respect and love. Let us, if necessary, have dirt and Greek temples, let us have dirt and medieval cathedrals, rather than our own unsuccessful attempts at cleanliness divorced equally from the beauties of art and nature. A system of drainage so perfect that it still survives after four thousand years in working order could not save the magnificence of the Cretan civilisation; and if we would save our own we must learn that, when a population becomes too dense for rural hygiene it must decentralise or die. It was the sudden conversion of the healthy country town of Athens into a densely overcrowded city, by the influx of refugees from the country on the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, which made her suffering from the plague so much greater than that in any other part of Greece; and on this and other accounts it is possible that in his brilliant and daring but unpopular policy Pericles was almost too enlightened; that the people should have had their way, and defended their

well-loved village homes and their healthy agricultural basis. Pericles, no doubt, in spite of the plague, would have carried his own policy to a successful issue ; but it was this policy which threw the government of Athens after his death into the hands of traders and jingoes, as greedy as they were incompetent, and puritanically shocked, like good traders, by the " wild courses " of Alcibiades, the one great man who, as Thucydides thought, might still have saved the Sicilian Expedition and his own city. Will traders never learn that if they must have great cities they must have vicious people, and that, though the good countryman is to be preferred to either, the vicious is to be preferred to the virtuous citizen ?

Socrates, at all events, who, so far from being a trader, was the most unbusinesslike craftsman that ever lived—Socrates, as reported by Plato in Bk. II of the *Republic*, saw clearly enough the difference between the old-fashioned country town which he remembered, " the genuine and healthy city," and this vast new city, " which is suffering from inflammation," with its traders and their galley-slaves, with its jingoes and their mercenary soldiers, its market-places and their yelling booths, its dandy idlers, and their courtesans, and their confectioners, and their poets at whom Plato sneers. Let the Spartans come from their Spartan tables to starve Athens and to raze her walls ; let the Macedonians come from their windy uplands to lord it over the whole of Greece ; let the Alexandrian Empire fall to the Roman, and the Roman to the barbarous north ; let the barbarous north " bring forth Alfred and Shakespeare," virtue and genius, poetry and architecture, till it fall again under the dominion of the trader and the trader's creed ; and when the barbarians are no more, when no virgin country, and no industrious agricultural people, and no oppressed class of slaves or labourers, remains to be exploited by, and revenged upon, the trader and the jingo and the slave-driver, let the whole civilised world betake itself again to agriculture and handicraft and universal recreation, like an old Greek peasant community, and learn again the secrets which it has now forgotten of architecture and art and poetry.

A. ROMNEY GREEN

A MODEL ANTHOLOGY

THE anthologist's real function is, as a rule, very dimly apprehended.

Most compilers of anthologies present us with collections of well-known works by well-known writers ; and, after reading them, we have little more information than we had before we saw them. Dr Forshaw, the skilful jeweller, in setting his treasury of pearls,* has a far better apprehension of his proper duty. Instead of loftily restricting himself to the aristocracy of letters, he, with a temper attuned to the spirit of our time, has set to work as a cultural democrat. He has fished for his pearls in the deepest depths of the suburban oceans, and enticed modest violets from their remotest provincial lairs. Something like four hundred poets are represented, from George Arthur Hawkins-Ambler, F.R.C.S., to Charles Goff, and from Albert William Guppy to the Duke of Argyll ; whilst there is also a charming coloured frontispiece of Madame Charlotte Raffalovich and a Preface by the Comtesse de Brémont who (says Dr Forshaw) "has drunk deeply of the fountain of Shakespeare."

In her Preface, referring to the boom in poetic competitions, the Comtesse describes them as "a sort of mental golf, whereby the poet may send the ball of inspiration high or low, according to the nimbleness of the touch of fancy, or the subtle force of wit. Surely," she adds, "such a noble pastime should be encouraged. . . . We have not far to look for a leader. We have at hand an enthusiastic leader in Dr Charles F. Forshaw." Four hundred poets, all provided with printed biographies. "It is," proceeds the Comtesse, "a noble list ; a veritable republic of poets, wherein the policeman, the postman, the village grocer, the shopkeeper, the weaver and the porter are biographed side by side with the barrister, the solicitor, the doctor, soldier, sailor, the bishop and the archdeacon, the duke, marquis, and peer, right up to the Poet Laureate." The Comtesse understates it : it

* *Pearls of Poetry : a Biographical Birthday Book of Popular Poets of the Period at the Time of the Coronation of King George and Queen Mary.* Edited by Charles F. Forshaw, Litt.D., LL.D. (Elliot Stock. 10s. 6d. net, 1911.)

is a veritable Millennium of Poets ; the archdeacon shall lie down with the policeman and an LL.D. shall lead them.

It is difficult to review so comprehensive a collection in so short a space, especially as there are the biographies as well as the poems. Of the Rev Frederick William Davis (who writes a sonnet on Tennyson's successful endeavour "to safely cross the bar") we learn that he is "a chess-player, a whist-player, a billiard-player, a curler, a badminton, croquet, cricket, golf, lawn-tennis, and skittle-player, a Royal Arch Freemason, musician, priest, and poet." Of the Rev R. W. W. Alexander, B.A., that "he is very fond of music, flowers, and natural history, and his parish work is to him a most pleasing duty. He has written verse since he was sixteen, and his poems have met with the direct approval of Royalty." Of Mr John Hill that he "is engaged in banking, but that business does not damp the fire of his muse." Of Mr James Nicol that "he did not become poetical until he got married." The Rev George Gibson, LL.D., "won his spurs during a terrible small-pox epidemic." Mr Robert Hanbury "is a member of the Incorporated Dental Society." Mr Alfred Holdsworth, "notwithstanding his literary and poetic proclivities, never neglects his business—that of a brush-manufacturer." The Rev Robert Ross "is now Vicar of Kidgrove, Staffordshire, where he has built a splendid up-to-date new Girls' School and Parish Room, etc., showing that the poet can also be the practical man." Mr A. Whitla hopes to find in his leaflet "Five Little Stones from the Brook" "a clarifying medium for the hazy atmosphere found in our smoke-rooms and over many an after-dinner cup of coffee. . . . He will ever be grateful for the early home-training and the principles instilled by God-fearing parents." Of Mrs Agnes Auld we learn that "being a grandmother did not prevent her attending lectures on Hygiene and Physiology."

Mr A. W. Guppy and his wife, on the other hand, "derive ample compensation for the absence of offspring in their mutual love of nature." Mr George Newman has the undoubtedly unusual distinction of having written a patriotic anthem for the inhabitants of Tristan d'Acunha. Mr J. Butler's telephotos of the Solar Eclipse of 1905 were reproduced in the *Sphere* and at school he was a successful gymnast. Mr Peter Rintoul "has touched nothing that he does not adorn," and Madame Charlotte Raffalovich "is called by Americans the Ella Wheeler Wilcox of England."

By way of illustration of the quality of the collection the best thing, perhaps, will be to give specimens of the three chief classes of poems included.

These are (1) nature-poems, (2) patriotic poems, (3) miscellaneous." Here is a nature-poem from the pen of Mr W. H. C. Nation, a poem fragrant with the eternal spring and testifying to an eye as observant of minutiae as Tennyson's own. It is called "A Surreptitious Catch":

Along a marsh a hungry crane,
With patient steps, his way did take
Each cranny of the rivage fain
To ransack with his slender beak.

When, suddenly, his watchful eye
At but four paces distance, saw
A worm, that back as suddenly
To his subterranean hole did draw

Nathless the crane did straight begin
His beak and claw alike to ply,
And hoping the retreat he, in
The end, of the insect might destroy,

The turf did tear up, and dispel
The clods, and with such vigour strive
That he, at last, perceives his bill
At of the cave the depth arrive.

But lo! just when of all his toil
The object he was nigh to get,
Beneath his very nib, a mole,
Without ado, devoured it!

Thus, often, lurchers, onward who
Are prone by shady ways to creep,
May the reward to those that's due
Who openly have acted, reap.

Milton himself never used the art of inversion like this. Love of country inspires many of these poets to their finest flights. "This precious stone set in the silver sea," said Shakespeare of England; Mr George Parker (who founded the Good Templar Order in Southampton) moulds the same sentiment to the purpose of his song!

O happy, happy England,
The land which gave us birth,
Our sea-girt, rocky Island,
The dearest spot on earth;

Oh who would not be thankful
For life so bright and fair ?
For all the English Homeland,
Unequalled anywhere.

Miss Emily Sutherland vies with Mr Parker ; she has constituted herself
the guardian muse of the War Office :

Then up and away lads,
Gird on your armorials,
Haldane is sounding his slogan to-day :
For honour and valour
May our Territorials
Live in the memory for ever and aye !

Finally we come to "Miscellaneous," under which heading I have regret-
fully had to include love-poems, for few of Dr Forshaw's bards allow the
thought of passion to endanger the Palladian chastity of their muse. The
example chosen is "Her Birthday"; the author the Rev T. Mavonwy
Davies, who, according to his biography, is "still comparatively young":

"How good of you, my dear," said she,
"My birthday not to forget,
And buy this precious gift for me,
The best I had since we met!"
"Forget it? I couldn't," said he, "your hair
And wrinkles remind me— Oh!
I wish you were as charming and fair
As you were long ago."

"It is my birthday to-day," she said,
"And why did you forget?"
She looked at him and her eyes were red,
Her rose cheeks were sad and wet.
He said, "You have yourself to blame—
Your face should remind me. Although
Your birthday came, you are just the same
As you were, long, long ago."

I hope you all follow it, my children.

J. C. SQUIRE

CHRONICLES

CURRENT ENGLISH POETRY

The Muse in Exile. By William Watson. (Jenkins. 3s. 6d. net.)

Songs of the Dead End. By Patrick MacGill. (Year Book Press. 3s. 6d. net.)

Dauber. By John Masefield. (Heinemann. 3s. 6d. net.)

The Song of Alfred. By H. Orsmond Anderton. (Constable. 5s. net.)

Poems. By Lucy Masterman. (Lane. 3s. 6d. net.)

Helen Redeemed. By Maurice Hewlett. (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)

Queen Tara. By Darrell Figgis. (Dent. 1s. and 2s. net.)

Deborah. By Lascelles Abercrombie. (Lane. 2s. 6d. net.)

MR WILLIAM WATSON has lately been delivering himself to the people of America in a lecture which is now published under the title, *The Poet's Place in the Scheme of Life* as an Introduction to his new book of poems. We learned from the newspapers that America flocked to hear (or see) him, as it has lately swarmed to see that other ornament of English letters, Mr Alfred Noyes. The nervous excitement of the American people on such occasions is most remarkable, and it is scarcely surprising that any of our poets who may be dissatisfied with the progress of their popularity in their own country should avail themselves of the stimulus of a popular ovation, such as may be so liberally accorded them on the other side of the Atlantic. Yet how amusing is that queer ingenuousness of the American people, in the security of which it believes itself to be welcoming a hero, whereas, in fact, it is only harbouring a refugee! Mr Watson scarcely encouraged it in its crude illusion. He did not flinch from revealing his view of the state of affairs in his own country. Speaking of "those innumerable persons, in whose scheme of life the poet cannot properly be said to have a place at all, . . . as a matter of fact, in my own country," he adds, "they form a majority so overwhelming that the minority sinks into an almost negligible, almost invisible fraction of the people as a whole." But of America, in a general sense, he can write, though not without certain reservations: "I have reason to think that the case is different." "With one exception," he continues, "there is not a living English poet the sales of whose poems would not have been thought contemptible by Scott and Byron." The exception is Kipling. Mr Watson is right. Kipling, as evi-

denced by sales, is undoubtedly the most popular poet in England. We might attribute the fact to his fame as a story-teller, but evidence of the small sales of the poems of other novelists would be against us ; or we might think his Imperialism the source of his appeal. Could this be so ? Are we seriously to believe the English people needs a poetry of Imperialism ? No, it is the catch and lilt of his verses, their showy decorative qualities, as in tinsel and cheap bunting, or sometimes, certainly, their singing quality (contemptible by no means in such songs as "Mandalay"). England's popular poetry is a product of the music-halls ; Rudyard Kipling is the finished type of super-musichall poet.

That his popularity is well-founded, and the direct result of his style, is emphasised by the immediate success of his disciple, Mr Patrick MacGill, "a poet the like of whom," asserts the irrepressible *James Douglas in the Star*, "we have not seen since Kipling burst upon us" ; or, as another reviewer pronounces him, "the greatest poet since Kipling" ; or, according to the more general statement of some third mirthful fellow : "He can do things, can our navvy poet."

The sale of Mr MacGill's first two books must have reached an aggregate of 10,000 ; his third, before me at present, though only a compilation from the first two (with some poems rewritten and a few fresh ones added), had an immediate and wide circulation, particularly, I learn, in the provinces. Considering his title to notoriety (that of *navvy* as compared with *lord*) his proportionate sales surely do not compare unfavourably with those of Byron. I doubt if Mr Watson can reckon by thousands the circulation of more than very few of his books ; on the other hand, it would be absurd to suggest that Mr Watson, judged on the work of his youth and prime, is not the better poet. Again, it is the measure, it is the glib music-hall manner of Patrick MacGill that arouses sympathy in the breasts of the English people ; also, for the entertainment of the affluent, he can readily administer the fine pat on the back of scorn :

You speak of the road in your verses, you picture the joy of it still,
You of the specs and the collars, you who are geese of the quill,
You pad it along with a wine-flask and your pockets crammed with dough,
Eat and drink at your pleasure, and write how the flowers grow—

or, as in the poem of the navvy found dead :

Arrogant, adipose, you sit in the homes he builded high ;
Dirty the ditch, in the depths of it he chooses a spot to die.

His use of technical words is sometimes interesting :

Dibble and drift and drill,
Ratchet and rail and rod,
Shovel and spanner and screw,
Hard-hafted hammer and hod,
The rattle of wheels on the facing points,
And the smell of the rain-washed sod.

Let us hope he is a good enough fellow fitly to scorn the adulations of his reviewers. "Songs of the Dead End" would be no very remarkable book if it were not that of a navvy of twenty-one.

Mr Watson and Patrick MacGill represent extreme opposites, both in style and in that MacGill will learn to write better, whereas Mr Watson has been learning for some years steadily to write worse. How has the author of "Wordsworth's Grave" so lost his power of self-criticism as to allow such lines as the following to limp into print?—

When Nature first designed,
In her all-procreant mind,
The man whom here to-night we are met to honour—
When first the idea of Dickens flashed upon her . . .

If "the case is different" in America, I wonder how his American audience received Mr Watson's after-dinner speech-poem, which opens in such a manner. Once he was an excellent craftsman : he should not persist in damaging his reputation with these later verses. "The Sappers and Miners" is the only poem I can mention with reverence. Its title brings the mind back to MacGill, who would probably scorn it, and not without excuse. The character of the Singing Navvy and that of the gentleman of culture composing verses, can scarcely be said to exist in the same world.

In a slim volume of essays dated 1853, I find a note to the effect that, if we are ever to have a poetry that shall be strictly intelligible to the people, it must be written by the people—a new order of poets must arise, of the people, and for the people. Certainly the intellectual classes have little to gain from Patrick MacGill, but it would be pleasant to think of him, if one only might, as a troubadour of the brotherhood of the people—though, alas! the type of Albert Chevalier, or even of Harry Lauder, far better suits the age. One would like to think of navvies and real tramps memorising his verses and chanting them as they work or as they go. These are the uses of a national or popular poetry ; indeed, adaptibility to such a use is possibly one

of the outstanding qualities of Kipling, whose narrative verse, besides his lyrical, is material for popular entertainments. But Kipling, like a good and true music-hall artist, is at scrupulous pains to give the public what it wants, instead of trusting the public to want what he may desire to give.

Compared with Kipling, or indeed with most poets of the popular schools, the superiority of Mr John Masefield is truly apparent. He may not yet have shown himself a first-class poet, but he has proved himself a steadfast man. He, I am certain, would not like to be held responsible for the bugle-blasts and syren-hoots of his impresario, the editor of the *English Review*. Amid the general clamour of press criticism, I do not remember the particular set of phrases ranted by *James Douglas in the Star*, but I can imagine them. Why have Masefield's narrative poems been judged as *literature* at all? Could they not have been accepted on their face value as thrilling popular narratives in which poetry existed not *per se*, but as inherent in the story? Standards of comparison were not lacking in the narrative poems of Crabbe, Scott, Byron, Tennyson, and others; the immense popularity of these in their day and their subsequent rapid downfall could have been remembered by every discriminating critic. Even those of more academic dignity rushed blindly in with their minor colleagues, the hacks of the press, and, of course, many of them now find it necessary to invent complicated but quite unconvincing excuses for their confusion. Meanwhile, Masefield's narrative poems have been read aloud with startling success at village gatherings, and the comment of a certain navy on *The Everlasting Mercy* is better than the phrases of any professor—"That was the best fight I've ever *seen*."

The volume at present under notice contains the author's last narrative but one, *Dauber*. In certain respects it has all the appearances of a novel. In more than one instance the transitionary passages from chapter to chapter are engineered in the orthodox prose fiction style.

The diction, too, is often quite foreign to the traditions of poetry, as—

"Why did you come to sea, painter?" he said.

"I want to be a painter," he replied,

"And know the sea and ships from A to Z, . . .

Or, as in the rapid colloquial stanza:

"Please, sir, they spoiled my drawings." "Who did?" "They."

"Who's they?" "I don't quite know, sir." "Don't quite know, sir?"

Then why are you aft to talk about it, hey ?
 Whom d'you complain of ? " No one." " No one ? " " No, sir."
 " Well, then, go forward till you've found them. Go, sir.
 If you complain of some one, then I'll see.
 Now get to hell ! and don't come bothering me."

Dauber still needs much pruning : its diffuseness detracts gravely from its emotional value as a story. This does not apply so much to the magnificent sea-descriptions in Parts VI and VII. For instance, in such a passage as the following, poetry is packed and concentrated almost as close indeed as the stanza will hold it :

To come, after long months, at rosy dawn,
 Into the placid blue of some great bay,
 Treading the quiet water like a fawn
 Ere yet the morning haze had blown away.
 A rose-flushed figure putting by the grey,
 And anchoring there before the city smoke
 Rose, or the church-bells rang, or men awoke.

And then, in the first light, to see grow clear
 That long expected haven filled with strangers—
 Alive with men and women ; see and hear
 Its clattering market and its money-changers ;
 And hear the surf beat, and be free from dangers,
 And watch the crinkled ocean blue with calm
 Drowsing beneath the Trade, beneath the palm.

Hungry for that he worked. . . .

On the whole the greatest faults of the poem reside in its raggedness of structure, its lack of concentrated force. I see no reason why it should live even so long as *Lara* or *Marmion* ; its prospects of immortality are no better than those of Kipling's *Brushwood Boy*. From the point of literature *per se* it is certainly a pity that Mr Masfield could not have contrived, or perhaps troubled, to write better ; but in its ephemeral aspects, in its aspect of providing entertainment for the moment, *Dauber*, as most of Mr Masfield's other narrative poems, accomplishes much of that which may justifiably be demanded of it.

For in what a hopeless case are we indeed with most of our other narrative poets, if we look to them for entertainment ! What are their subjects ? What, oh, indeed, what can be their object ? I once met a man who had read two of the six volumes of Mr Doughty's *Dawn in Britain* : it subsequently

transpired that he had done so because he was reviewing it for his living. I have yet to meet the man who will tell me he has read a proportionate amount of Mr Anderton's *Song of Alfred*. Myself, I will not pretend for a moment to have compassed, with immense effort, more than twenty pages. Why has Mr Anderton written us an account of King Alfred in verse at this date? If it was a work of love undertaken for his own salvation, to his own salvation be it, and may I not revile him. But *for us*? I ask, why apparently *for us*? and with a powerful list of subscribers to beguile our judgment.

From the tension of such a puzzle we are thankful indeed to unknit our brows toward Mr Masefield, who, however grave a moralist, at least seeks to entertain us, and usually succeeds; or to turn over the pages of a volume of polished lyrics, such as those of Mrs Masterman. If all minor poetry were so elegant and charming, and particularly so unpretentious as these verses, I might learn to be grateful for it. They represent the highest *culture* of our day, therefore we ask and expect no more from them than a pleasant hour. But of the best narrative poetry we ask very much indeed; we require, in fact, that it haunt us by more than its construction, language, and emotional contents—it must be first-rate as a story. It may be good reading for the study, but it *must* be good material for the rhapsodist. A narrative poem must bear the test of being read aloud. This, of course, is not to say that it need be realistic. Its setting may be of any day or of no day; it may exist purely in the imagination, as in the case of Mr Hewlett's *Helen Redeemed*, to which an entirely different set of tests should be applied to those we most naturally apply to *Dauber*. The latter must represent modern life truly, however poetically, or it will represent nothing at all; of the former we only require that it shall haunt our imaginations. Mr Hewlett's world of the imagination is one in which a man may either dwell completely, or he must remain locked outside. Even William Morris is less exclusive, and the door of his romance (as in such a poem as *Sigurd*) remains open to all. Though we need most a living narrative poetry of the time, nevertheless we are grateful for such poems as Mr Hewlett's, provided particularly they can bear that test of delivery by the rhapsodist, as in the case of *Helen Redeemed*. And, to arrive at a true judgment in this matter, we have only to compare this poem with Tennyson's idylls and narratives, Arthurian or modern. Tennyson was false in his psychology, wrong in his expression, always securely *wrong*; Mr Hewlett is neither wrong nor right:

the matter is entirely arbitrary. I cannot understand why at least half the admirers of his prose romances should not be able to regard his romances in verse with equal admiration. For thrilling narrative take such a passage as—

... but Paris on the roof
Of his high house, where snug he sat aloof,
Drew taut the bowstring home, and notched a shaft,
Soft whistling to himself, what time with craft
Of peering eyes and narrow twisted face
He sought an aim.

Swift from her hiding-place
Came burning Helen, then, in her blue eyes
A fire unquenchable, but cold as ice
That scorcheth ere it strike a mortal chill
Upon the heart. "Darest thou...?"

Smiling still,
He heeded not her warning, nor he read
The terror of her eyes, but drew and sped
A screaming arrow, deadly, swerving not—
Then stood to watch the ruin he had wrought.

Or for examples of rapid and exciting dialogue, I might quote many passages from throughout the poem. It is indeed to be wondered at that his poetry remains apparently a sealed packet to more than perhaps a twentieth of his admirers.

Surely out of the drama will at last be evolved the best poetic narrative medium for our time, and therefore in this survey chiefly of narrative poetry I have reserved until the end the plays which constitute the remaining two volumes of those selected as a basis for my remarks.

Just as those who have seen a performance of Mr Masfield's *Nan* will undoubtedly agree that in the drama, rather than in narrative poetry, he used a medium far better adapted both to his genius and to the character of his simple tales, so conversely those who have read Mr Abercrombie's *Sale of St Thomas* will probably agree that the medium of simple narrative verse is far more native to him than the drama. Most of the poems in his earlier books are in dramatic form, but it is ostensibly drama for the study: *Deborah*, however, is intended for the stage. I am inclined to think Mr Abercrombie too intellectual by temperament and too unrestrainedly fertile in his imagination to contrive as yet a good play for the stage. Later he will probably rise to the first rank of poetic playwrights. This may be suitably illustrated by comparison of the present drama with such as that of Mr Darrell Figgis.

Deborah is yet to be performed ; *Queen Tara* was acted at Dublin in 1910. But there is scarcely a line in the latter play which is not the result of the imitation or assimilation of the playwrights of past centuries. Mr Figgis's characters purport to inhabit Illyricum ; actually they inhabit the old shelf of an Elizabethan property cupboard. Mr Abercrombie's figures are represented to dwell in "a fishing and pilot village on a great estuary" ; actually they might inhabit anywhere : they are human beings imagined and visualised ; they spring out of his own mind by assimilation of the raw material of human character, they never reach him sieved from the minds of other poets. When Lyof in *Queen Tara* exclaims, " Tentative fiddlesticks ! " or Antony, " A test yourself would boggle at," the phrases sound not daring but inappropriate. But when one of the men in *Deborah* exclaims, " Why are you fasht ? " we do not raise our eyebrows, Mr Abercrombie's characters being under no obligation in their speech to any single convention of style. Mr Figgis employs a metaphor—

Oh, my good God !
It foots the very peaks of insolence—

and, for whatever it may be worth, it scarcely startles the imagination at all. But when the madwoman in *Deborah* cries—

I see a man's life like a little flame
Clinging to one end of a burning spill ;
And the man's in the grasp of a great anger,
Who is for shaking the last glimmer of life
From off him, as you shake the fire of a match
When you would have it done with burning—

it is so obviously new and original that if I saw it quoted anonymously I should wonder and I should ask, " Who's the poet ? " The closing speech of *Queen Tara*, spoken by Antony, is in all the conventions :

Bear them away ! Their trial shall follow after.
The last succession being out, I appoint
Peter as monarch, as my powers permit me,
Subject to ratification at the Senate.
Yet do not hail him ; we've a sadder business
For our attention. Bear this poor clay up,
And lay him by the queen he once so loved.
The dawn is punctual to our obsequies :

See where it paints the silver casements gold,
Dashing the clouds with rubies ! Oh, my king,
No dawn shall ever win my love again.

The old woman in *Deborah* brings the play to an end thus :

She's gone,
Straight for the middle of the marsh she made ;
No living hand could save her. Oh, she ran
So swift, and calling as she went out loud,
Bent almost double for the strength of wind,
I could not have believed the like. My breath
Is almost blown out of my poor body !
Pray God Deborah's got some brandy here.
Poor lass ! her path would take her right to the worst
And deadliest quaking mire of the whole marsh ;
'Twould swallow her before she knew her feet
Had lost firm ground.—Why is not Deborah back ?
If the mire stifles her, she's but herself
To blame ; no living hand could save the girl.

This is not particularly good poetry, but it is simple, adequate and very haunting. Mr Abercrombie's persons all have temperament ; the characters of *Queen Tara* are the puppets of some kind of impersonal tradition. In short, Mr Figgis seems to me interested primarily in writing verse, whereas *Deborah* is the result of the mind's impulse to conceive, and the imagination's passionate desire to create, a world of human beings more real even than humanity itself.

Most of Mr Abercrombie's faults are, I think intellectual. For instance, I cannot imagine Deborah saying, " All my body and brain needs David." Such elemental persons are surely not conscious of their brains. Nor can I quite feel that her imagination would twist such images from the wind as in the last act (which reads like a separate one-act play). His characters are sometimes guilty of delaying the drama beyond all patience with irrelevant descriptions of their emotions. They speak best as when, for instance, Deborah, at a moment of the highest emotion, concentrates her words thus :

You will get used to this. 'Tis how things go
Here in the world. You trusted in your life,
Did you not ? Aye, you trusted there was joy
To carry you through life. This is what falls
To those who trust so.

Or—

Why, you should smile when you drink gall, Miriam !
For there's nought else your soul will drink of life.

The character of the old mother of David is perhaps the truest in the play. Her speeches are, for the most part, completely instinctive and spontaneous :—

I am alone now ! I am alone with my age !
Nothing is left me out of all my years,
Nothing but grieving. Long ago they killed
My son, and now my daughter turns on me
And joins with them who've been so wicked to me.
I'll never heal of this : nothing but grieving !
O Christ, I am too old ; I should be gone.

There is no doubt that Mr Abercrombie has developed in most of his work a very significant combination between narrative and dramatic poetry, which, if space permitted, I should delight to illustrate at some length by quotation. Further, I am convinced that this development is indicative of the immediate tendency of English poetry, that narratives in a form combining the lyrical and dramatic qualities of verse will increasingly preoccupy the attention of our present and future poets.

Editor's Note.—Henceforward such books of English poetry as are judged each quarter to be most representative of current tendencies will be grouped together for discussion in one comprehensive article by an experienced critic of poetry. The selection of the books will be left in the discretion of the particular critic appointed to review the quarter.

DRAMATIC CHRONICLE

THERE was a time when, for the space of some weeks, the theatre in London lay like Tom Bowling, a sheer hulk, heaving heavily, finding not even a current to carry it along. There were no audiences, and the Ethiopian crew sent up a loud lament which was echoed in the newspapers. Then Mr Du Maurier fished out some old gear and tackle, and Mr Granville Barker imported Miss Wish Wynne from the music-hall, and they caught a puff of wind, enough to be carried back into a current along which to drift. The theatre became mildly interesting again. *Diplomacy* and *The Great Adventure* gave habitual playgoers enough pleasure to send them once more hopefully to the various box-offices and "libraries." There was an astonishing crop of new plays, weak farces for the most part, which met the fate they deserved. Two imported plays, by contrast, seemed to have much merit, and the public has been bullied by Mr James Douglas and the *Pall Mall Gazette* for not going in their thousands to *Typhoon* and *The Yellow Jacket*. Both these plays suffer from a divided intention. In the theatre you must be either Ethiopian or artistic. If you are an Ethiopian you must be frank about it. It is quite useless to cry, with Blake's Black Boy, "For I am black, but oh, my soul is white." The Ethiopian is an Ethiopian simply because he leaves his soul outside the theatre and is therefore concerned only with detail and tricks. Sardou was perfectly frank about it and therefore almost always amazingly successful. Melchior Lengyel, the author of *The Happy Island* and *Typhoon*, is not so frank. His interest is clearly centred on theatrical effectiveness, but he insists on calling the attention of his audience to the colour of his soul, which he has left outside the stage-door, so that it is impossible for them to take it into account. That is quite enough to kill a play. But then *Typhoon* had to suffer another trial, for Mr Laurence Irving, in his taste for the bizarre, was attracted by the Japanese element in the play, sent Mr Lengyel to join his soul outside the stage-door, and invited a Japanese gentleman, son of the Japanese translator of Bernard Shaw, etc., to help him to make the spirit of Bushido breathe through every line. The spirit of Bushido is a fine thing, much too fine for the structure of Mr Lengyel, which cracked, toppled, and came heavily to the ground

under the strain of the fervour of Mr Laurence Irving and his Japanese adviser. Between these three conflicting elements, Mr Lengyel's play, his soul, and the spirit of Bushido, no audience could be anything but bewildered. The first would remind it of countless French dramas, the second would leave it groping, the third would let loose a sort of spasm of English jingoism. Between the three there would be some sort of excitement, but no solid satisfaction. That *Typhoon* has failed to attract audiences is perfectly normal and reasonable, and there is no just cause for lamentation.

Still less is there reason to complain of the semi-success of *The Yellow Jacket*. It is most charming to the eye, very amusing in its conventions, but it is for the most part dull or distressing to the ear. The authors may claim that the piece is an exact transcript from the Chinese. No doubt all the mechanical effects are scrupulously copied, but either Benrimo and his collaborator have selected a poor specimen of its kind, or they have been careless or insensitive as translators. The actual play presented through the delightfully complete conventions of the Chinese theatre lacks charm, poetry, atmosphere. Had these been translated into the Western theatre it would have been absolutely irresistible. As it is the play rouses curiosity and interest, tickles into acquiescence, and then leaves you there. It is a fine opportunity missed. All the same, in the economical use of the stage, in its frank and honest treatment of the audience as collaborators, it gives a lesson that was sorely needed both by English theatrists and English audiences. There is only one writer for the stage in England who has any conception of this collaboration between artist and audience, Mr J. M. Barrie, and he, having no dramatic sense, is impotent to use it, and can only play with it. His playing, however, is more delightful than the earnest efforts of his colleagues who have to use a cumbrous technique to set their entertainment moving at all. *The Yellow Jacket* is very like a Barrie play: all tricks and irrelevant humour, with no drama.

It is difficult to discover any tendency in the extravagant efforts of the theatre in London. At first sight it all seems rather helpless and groping. "The public is so queer nowadays," said an ancient warrior, the other day (he had just produced a deplorable failure). On close inspection, there is revealed a sort of retrogression, a definite turning back to the old ways on the part of the Ethiopians, a tendency to mark time and summarise on the part of those who desire the art of the theatre. *The Schoolmistress* has been revived at the Vaudeville. *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* is once more nightly to

solve her problem by suicide at the St. James's. At the Comedy *Strife* again brings its leaven of stern sincerity into the mixture of hocus-pocus and irrelevancy and pompous solemnity of the West-End. It rebukes the heartless triviality of its neighbours and once more proves the superiority of a play as an entertainment over one which is only a series of actors' "parts." There are many actors now going into management, all apparently intent on conducting their theatres on the old system of making their own personalities the hub of the machine. Such a system is worn out. No writer for the stage can escape the influence of the Court Theatre and the Abbey Theatre, and, having perceived the superior results to be obtained by setting the play above the leading actor, cannot with conviction make his work subordinate to the managerial personality. There are not enough plays of that type to go round, nor, if the truth be told, are there enough compelling personalities among the actors to keep the theatres open and attractive to the public. There are personalities far more dominant in the music-hall. It is encouraging, then, that Mr Kenneth Douglas, having failed with his first venture, a sub-actorial farce, should admit the paramount importance of the play and revive *Strife*, thus relying on the dramatist to satisfy the public and aiding him with the most loyal service. That surely is the only sound principle on which the theatre can be conducted; it is the principle on which Mr. Barker conducts his theatres and the Melville family control theirs. In both the actors are used as a medium between the dramatist and the audience, and though, in the Melville theatre, plays and actors are inferior to those in the Barker theatre, yet the use of them is superior, more generous, more free, and more apt to set up the collaboration with the audience without which a play cannot really come into being.

At the Prince of Wales's Mr Martin Harvey has adventured with *The Taming of the Shrew* into the Barker-Reinhardt style of production. First and foremost, Christopher Sly, through whose mind the farce reaches the audience, is allowed to continue his existence beyond the Induction and throughout to witness and comment upon the play. That is clear gain. It adds to the fun and keeps the mind of the audience alert. Unfortunately, however, the faulty scheme of lighting that marred *The Winter's Tale* and *Twelfth Night*, has been imitated, so that the actors in the farce are forced out upon the audience, whereas the audience should be led through Christopher Sly into the farce. The appeal to the eye is falsified by the appeal to the ear. Two conflicting processes are set up, and every effect in the play

proper is blurred. Christopher Sly dominates the scene in the wrong way, and becomes a barrier instead of a channel between the play and the audience. The dramatist's—Shakespeare's—intention is not served, but is rather belied, for he, surely, better than any writer, understood that a play begins in the minds of the audience as soon as they are settled in their seats and are roused to attention by the signal for the appearance of the players. It is the business of dramatists and actors to keep their attention and interest alive, by their skill to focus it upon a series of actions and speeches, and so to translate it through the unfolded story into symbols of the eternal drama of life. If what is presented upon the stage is only a series of more or less amusing tricks, mental and mechanical and physical, then it is impossible to hold the attention of the audience at all. If the business of the stage is so little imaginatively understood that the decoration is in one key, the acting in another, the gesture in another, then the audience cannot but be baffled, and must put up with accidents and irrelevancies for its amusement. This is the most frequent plight of theatre audiences, but it is lamentable that they should be reduced to it when the production on the stage and the imagination behind it are those of a master dramatist like Shakespeare, who, as in *Hamlet*, could so powerfully engage the attention of his audience as to permit himself the luxury of long philosophical discussions and utterances, and, as in his farces, to leave the stage free for the clowns and buffoons of the company. Surely the scenes of buffoonery in his plays were thrown in as a sop to the actors to induce them to leave the play proper to move by its own force of drama, and possibly also to allow the audience a little relief from their attention or to serve the purposes now fulfilled by our intervals of ten or fifteen minutes. Whichever way you look at it, it is necessary to go back to Shakespeare to find a thoroughly practical use of the theatre, the technique of the time being employed to serve the interests of the drama and then—only then—the interests of actors, managers, playwrights, etc. If individual interests are allowed to come first then there is really no room left for the audience at all, and they will only frequent the theatre because they have no other place wherein two or three can amusingly gather together. During the last century there was no other such place, and the drama had a very bad time of it, while actors, managers, etc., had a very good time, and very cleverly persuaded the English nation that the theatre was the only respectable place of amusement. Now all places of amusement are respectable, competition is open and

the theatre has healthily to fight for its existence. It is not fighting very lustily nor very cleverly, but that is chiefly because its present practitioners are fat and scant of breath as the result of their too easily triumphant youth. Their successors will have more and more to turn to Shakespeare to discover the scope of their art, and to find weapons with which to overthrow its enemies. Mr William Poel showed the way long ago. Mr Granville Barker, and now Mr Martin Harvey, have followed it. There will be many others.

More and more the music-halls are taking over the theatres' old function of providing light amusement. Their success with the go-as-you-please entertainment called a Revue—because Mr George Grossmith brought it over from Paris—has made it quite clear that the theatre and the music-hall are separate. The one exists to give imaginative delight, the other to provide light, *i.e.* unimaginative, entertainment. The one is for sense, the other for nonsense. The theatre will depend upon the organised dramatic idea, the music-hall upon the cleverness and charm of individual performers. Take, for instance, *Hello, Ragtime*, at the Hippodrome. Its existence is justified by the presence of Miss Ethel Levey, a creature of extraordinary personality and wonderful gifts. It is part of her charm that all her gifts seem to her to be just a joke. Her use of them is always, as it should be, impertinent, as impertinent as, say, Mr Bernard Shaw's use of his. If the gods have given you all the gifts, save dignity, then are you a servant of nonsense. To serve the drama you must have dignity. Shakespeare—(I beg his pardon for dragging him in again)—has dignity even in his farces, even in his condescension to the buffoons of his company. Now the revueist, the servant of nonsense, will remove the dignity from everything he touches, reduce all human beings and things in scale, and present them in caricature so that they will appear gloriously, hilariously nonsensical. The Revues, thus existing side by side with the drama, will be an admirable corrective. It is the function of nonsense to correct sense, to stir it into finer and more productive activity, to keep it in touch with the sense of humour and balance. It has been necessary for nonsense to be organised in the music-hall before sense could be equipped with its proper machinery in the theatre; that is why the rise of the music-hall has seemed to coincide with the decay of the theatre proper. When the Revues have been made really efficient, then the theatre, out of reaction from so much excellent nonsense, will begin to emerge. For the present, those who are anxious for the resurrection of the theatre may pray that the controllers of the music-

halls will enrol the services of the best writers, the best actors, the best musicians, the best painters, of the day. They will probably be forced to do so, and then there will be hope for the theatre, more hope than my three months' survey of the West-End theatres would seem to justify. In the theatre I look for drama as its only genuine source of amusement, and, though, in its absence, I may be tickled by ingenuity and irrelevant humour, yet I cannot help feeling that time spent in it, in gazing at instead of living in a spectacle, is wasted. There are so many other more profitable employments. Having not the faintest desire to escape from life, I cannot but resent the efforts of those who use the theatre as a means to that end. So much it is necessary to state in order to make clear my position as a critic. The odd thing is that, the worse the theatre grows, the greater wax my hopes, and these, almost against my will, take me to the West-End theatres and set me writing about what I have seen. Finding so little accomplishment that is worth writing about, I am then forced to seek tendencies, and to mark how that which seems to be vain and useless is being made to serve that which is the aim of all aspiration, the use of human institutions in the service of vision.

GILBERT CANNAN

Note.—Mr. T. E. Hulme's *German Chronicle* is unavoidably held over till next quarter, the present issue of *POETRY AND DRAMA* already containing 16 pages in excess of its intended bulk.

FRENCH CHRONICLE

ARTHUR RIMBAUD was born in 1854; he began writing at the age of fifteen; he burned his manuscripts at the age of nineteen; he died at thirty-seven. Endowed with the faculties of a man of genius, this lad, says M. Claudel, appeared in France, "comme Jeanned'Arc," at a time of disaster and of material and moral dejection. His story is the strangest in literature. M. Paterne Berrichon's book, *Jean-Arthur Rimbaud, le Poète (Mercure de France, 3.50)*, gives the outward course of that story, the biographical details, until Rimbaud's disappearance from the world of letters. He puts events into their right connection with documents, deals with the legend of illicit relationship with Verlaine, and supplies a textual commentary on Rimbaud's work. For all this, those who admire Rimbaud's work—all those who know it—must be grateful to M. Berrichon; in fact, his book is indispensable. But the real story of Rimbaud is not biographical at all; the events of his life are the outward manifestations of the inner conflict: the escapes from Charleville to Paris; the extenuating tramps between those two towns; the drunkenness, the responsibility for which M. Berrichon lays to the charge of Rimbaud's companions; the suffering in Paris; the relationship with Verlaine and its lamentable end,—these are just the noise which a caged spirit made against its incomprehensible bars. The true story of Rimbaud can only be told by men like Claudel. I think his Preface to the *Œuvres de Arthur Rimbaud—vers et prose—revues sur les manuscrits originaux et les premières éditions, mises en ordre et annotées par Paterne Berrichon* (which the *Mercure de France* has just published in a fine, well-printed volume at 7 fr.) brings out the real Rimbaud, the "mystique à l'état sauvage, une source perdue qui ressort d'un sol saturé," a seer, an austere spirit. How the dust, the dirt—earthly, moral, human—the vermin vanish! And Rimbaud appears like an angel from a suit of rags, a terrible angel. On the death-bed in Marseilles, to which he had been brought from Africa with a leg to be amputated, he dreamed aloud. He had renounced literature at the age of nineteen to dream; perhaps he had renounced dreaming simply to live; he finishes his life in a dream. "He says now," relates his sister, "strange things,

very softly, in a voice which would delight me, if it did not pierce my heart. What he says are dreams, yet it is not at all the same thing as when he had the fever. You would say, and I believe, that he did it purposely." Sometimes he asked his doctors whether they could not see the extraordinary things he himself perceived; and he described his impressions marvellously. But there was something in his case which they did not understand. There is something in his case which we shall never understand; we may grope and meditate. Happy we if we are ever so fortunate as Sainte Chantal (quoted by M. Claudel): "At the dawn of day, God gave me to enjoy, almost imperceptibly, a little light in the highest, supreme point of my mind. All the rest of my soul and its faculties did not participate: but it only lasted about half an Ave Maria." In *L'Histoire d'une de ses folies*, Rimbaud says:

J'inventais la couleur des voyelles!—*A* noir, *E* blanc, *I* rouge, *O* bleu, *U* vert.—Je réglais la forme et le mouvement de chaque consonne, et, avec des rythmes instinctifs, je me flattai d'inventer un verbe poétique accessible, un jour ou l'autre, à tous les sens. J'en réservai la traduction.

Ce fut d'abord une étude. J'écrivais des silences, des nuits, je notais l'inexprimable. Je fixais des vertiges.—*Une Saison en Enfer*.

In the four years of his literary life he absorbed all the styles, and invented new; then his vision transcended language, and he wrote no more. But French poetry, from his advent onwards, radiates with his energy.

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This edition of Rimbaud's works bears witness to the awakening in France of an interest in the printed book, as such. Good printing is in honour. The publications of Georges Crès, of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, and this new series of the *Mercure de France*, in which has also appeared a volume of Verhaeren, are examples. The volume, *Œuvres de Emile Verhaeren*, contains (for 7 fr.) the matter of two of the volumes of the ordinary edition: *Les Campagnes Hallucinées*, *Les Villes Tentaculaires*—*Les Douze Mois*, *Les Visages de la Vie*. The greatest European poet of our time is Verhaeren. I have said it before, and each time I renew contact with his work I am forced to repeat it. He is not perfection—that is one of his merits; and it is affecting to picture him hovering over the poems in this volume correcting them—Jupiter correcting his lightning! But the old Verhaeren is still there, nevertheless—the hallucinated spectator of the desolation of the country-side and of the omni-absorbent towns; the



tender-hearted poet of *Les Douze Mois*. Surely no more touching thing has been written about the poor than his poem for February, *Les Pauvres*, with the mournful beat of its first line—

Il est ainsi de pauvres cœurs,

repeated in every stanza, the last word being changed; and with its protest, marked by the change of rhythm of the last stanza :

Il est ainsi de pauvres gens,
aux gestes las et indulgents
sur qui s'acharne la misère
au long des plaines de la terre.

As one of his critics (whom I must not quote here too often, for fear of those who carp), M. Duhamel, says, Verhaeren was the first to see things in a certain way; what is more important, to see certain things, and to express what he thus saw with exactly suitable words and rhythm; and Verhaeren was an initiator because he gave speech to a whole category of emotions which were never before so completely and so consciously experienced. What a sinister menace there is in these *Campagnes Hallucinées*, for instance! Never once does the poet allow the sunshine and the beauty of growing things to distract him from his contemplation of the cancerous evil which is eating into and poisoning the life of the country-side. It is a picture bitten into the copper with the most corrosive of acids; it is a picture of universal corrosion—of men and morals, of field and village. And the winds in Verhaeren's poems! You feel them searching into your bones; the grit of them is in your nostrils, between your teeth, and your skin is loathsome to the touch with it. Then there is the Verhaeren, contemplator of the town; . . . but a book must be written, one that will replace the dull book of M. Stefan Zweig.

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The influence of these two poets, Verhaeren and Rimbaud, extends over many of the young French poets of the twentieth century, who, according to M. H.-M. Barzun (I noticed his *Hymne des Forces* last year), may be divided into two groups.

First, there are the *intuitives*—analysts, subjective, *lyrical*—whose aspiration it is to realise the poetical sum of the acutest sensations and the subtlest correspondences of the present. Principal among these are: Jules

Romains, Charles Vildrac, Georges Duhamel, René Arcos, Théo Varlet, Paul Castiaux, Henri Herz, Luc Durtain, and P.-J. Jouve. These poets are said to be continuing the *lyrical expression*, with its homocentric image and notation, of Rimbaud, Laforgue, Verlaine, and Mallarmé.

Next, there are the *visionaries*—synthetists, objective, *dramatic*; they are: Louis Mañdin, Guillaume Apollinaire, Fernand Divoire, Jean de Bosschère, Georges Polti, Pierre Jaudon, Sebastien Voirol, R. Canudo, A.-R. Schneeberger, Claude-Amayrol-Grander, Tancred de Visan, Alexandre Mercereau, and H.-M. Barzun. These poets are said to be following Paul Adam, Verhaeren, and Claudel in the creation of the *dramatic chant*, by rhythm, idea, and universalised conflicts.

I give M. Barzun's own words. He makes these distinctions in an article called *Du Symbole au Drame*, which appears in the second number of a review he has founded, *Poème et Drame* (*Figuière*, 6 vols. a year), for the defence of the second group and for the illustration of the ideas contained in his *Ere du Drame, essai de synthèse poétique moderne* (*Figuière*, 2.50). He also defines the "new beauty" as the beauty of crowds and of all the different forces of modern life.

M. H.-M. Barzun finds his athletes, pioneers, poet-pioneers of the "new beauty" in every country of the world: a German phalanx has proclaimed "la grande poésie mondiale"; ten Italian athletes have torn the great Roman nation from the frequentation of its tombs. In Spain, Russia, Austria, and Bohemia isolated voices call and answer one another; while in England an English "pléiade" has arisen—I do not know where.

Still, as regards France, M. Barzun's division may, I think, be accepted as real. The definition of the aims of those on each side, like all definitions of that nature, is arbitrary. The poets of the first group, for instance, owe quite as much to Verhaeren, Paul Adam, and Claudel as do those in the second group. Yet not one of those who have been called *intuitive* would wish to see himself ranged with those termed *visionaries* (Orphic dramatists, according to Guillaume Apollinaire); and vice versa, I dare say. There is evidence even of a great deal of bad feeling between *intuitive* and *visionary* (the words are not mine, I repeat): two camps, in fact, and open warfare. Meanwhile, works will be produced; and it is by works, not faith, that a poet will live.

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I have two books by writers whom M. Barzun puts among his *visionaries*:

Paroles devant la Vie, by Alexandre Mercereau (*Figuière*, 3.50), and *Ariel Esclave*, by Louis Mandin (*Mercure de France*, 3.50).

M. Mercereau's *Paroles devant la Vie* lack those qualities of imagination which made his *Contes des Ténèbres* curious reading—the anguish and vertigo of whirling immobility (the top) which comes to a man who perceives his loneliness and conceives the universe immensely, the sudden transition from one mental state to another, as in a nightmare, which gave the *Contes* a kind of occult logic. The link between the *Contes* and the *Paroles* may be found in the section called “Passer” of the later book. But in the *Paroles* the troubled waters of the *Contes* have become, to all appearance, serene. *Paroles devant la Vie*—“Le Poète,” “La Fiancée,” “La Femme enceinte,” “La Mère,” “Soi-même,” “La Demeure,” “La Mort”—an exaltation of life, a long meditation, in lyrical prose. M. Mercereau begins with an avowal of ignorance of what the life-essence—which he likens to the fixed light of the lamp that projects the changing figure of a cinematograph-film—may be; but, having confessed, he marvels at the wonder of a power that, from one seed, will develop into a world of growth. He establishes the necessity of death, for in the continual exchange of life and death, the constant state of aggregation and disaggregation, he sees the essential condition of existence. Then, passing from the general to the particular, from the lesson of death to its bearing on men, he makes the suggestion that we should gain greatly in gravity and wisdom if we could but have . . . temporary deaths—lustra, in fact. Still M. Mercereau does not astonish you so much with the novelty of his ideas as with their abundance. Indeed, he has put the accumulated stores of the world under contribution; and his *Paroles* may be read as a statement of mankind's present attitude before the eternal mystery of things. Perhaps the book is less interesting because it is not the expression in art of a personality, but of an intelligence. However, in this book, M. Mercereau has made a long stride towards his liberation from the multitudinous influences of his culture and erudition; but he is not yet completely free from the one, and he still bears unpleasant traces of the other. *Paroles devant la Vie* was a dangerous book to write, since it was bound to reveal the moral state of the writer. M. Mercereau must be praised for his courage and tenacity of purpose.

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There is one part of M. Louis Mandin's book, *Ariel Esclave*, which I have read, and returned to and will again return to, with pleasure. It is those sections

which he calls "L'Ombre des Couples" and "Les Ailes de la Nuit d'Amour." There you have a richly imagined, intimate, and sensual love-poetry. Yes, sensual; and I defend the poet who writes sensual love-poetry, and by sensuality I mean, not heavy beastliness and lust, but that voluptuousness which is physical in origin and spiritual in cognisance and utterance. With it must go a frank, childlike acceptance of physiological facts, and a clean delight in the beauty of the human body (one of our standards of beauty). This is understood in France, and not understood in England, where liberty—liberty of the spirit, the only liberty—is unknown. It would be impossible, for instance, for an Englishman to publish two poems like "Les Reines Voilées" and "Eurythmie"; and yet how tender they are, and discreet! "Eurythmie" might be a translation from the *Thousand and One Nights*. . . . But no, our love-poetry is still ruled by troubadour and Italian tradition and by the sourness which England has put into religion. In M. Mandin's mind the sentiment of voluptuousness is allied with the sentiment of virginity. His most intimate poems have a virginal atmosphere which seems to be created by subtle chemical reactions in his words. M. Mandin's rhythms, too, are satisfying and solidly constructed.

The other part of the book does not move one so much. M. Mandin says that its message is: "If you are enslaved to common tasks, and if there is an Ariel shut up within you, that is, an eager sense of beauty, of creation, of life and of harmony, it has the imperative right to live, and, if it is only a gift to you of suffering, your duty is still to nourish it within you, to defend it against all ambient hideousness, against all the stiflings and against all the serfdoms. . . . You must never consent to fall, and you must struggle indefatigably to conquer Liberty, without which life is an outrage." But Æsop was a free man before he was a freedman; or, in other words, a man creates his own slavery; the common task is only a predisposing cause, and not the slavery itself.

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Verhaeren stands at the fountain-head of what may be called the *social* poetry of to-day—Futurism, M. Barzun's Dramatism, Whitmanism, and Unanimism. But Unanimism owes its value purely to the personality of its creator, M. Jules Romains. Without that personality Unanimism, as a creed, would not move us one whit; it is the subtlety of M. Romains's

notations of the actions and interactions on himself of the group-forces that are the gods of Unanimism that calls for our admiration. M. Romain is one of the most powerful and original of the younger French writers: twelve volumes, none of them negligible, since 1904, poems, novels, a play in verse, and two prose books are there to vouch for his calling; and in them may be traced the gradual unfolding of a writer who bids fair to become a master. In verse, *La Vie Unanime*, rough-hewn and strong, violently new in feeling, *Le Premier Livre de Prières*, M. Romain's private meditations before the different groups, *Un Être en Marche*, a long study in complex emotions; and, in prose, *Le Bourg Régénéré*, a tale of "la vie unanime," doctrinal and yet full of interesting notations, *Mort de Quelqu'un*, a study, in the form of a novel, of the social effect of the death of an obscure man—lead up to, but do not allow us to anticipate, the odes of *Odes et Prières* (just published, *Mercure de France*, 3.50) and the novel, *Les Copains* (*Figuière*, 3.50). It is as though M. Romain, having climbed the steep, rugged, often obscure mountain-paths of his consciousness, had emerged into the loneliness, the clear air, and the simplicity of the summit; had been overwhelmed by the melancholy of his loneliness; and then, remembering men in the towns below, he had laughed. The Odes owe nothing to the *Unanime*, except their distance from it. But perhaps my image has led me too far. Still, there is an open-hearted laughter in *Les Copains*. Every one who is not afraid of life and words should read this book. M. Romain has amused himself in writing it, and has poked a little fun at himself and at one or two of his contemporaries; it is a farce—but a joyous farce—with an undercurrent of unanimism, unnoticeable to those who are ignorant of the previous books. You will like the book for its humour, its style, its humanity, its story, and its fresh imagery. M. Romain has an inimitable way of describing ordinary situations so that the sensations seem entirely new: they are indeed new; he recreates them. See, for instance, his description in this book of cycling, alone and in company, or of the journey of the old man to Paris in *Mort de Quelqu'un*. As for the Odes, M. Romain seems to have been driven to meditate in solitude. They are the most intimate of his poems. All the minute psychological analysis of *Un Être en Marche* tells you little of its author; you are aware of a powerful directive intelligence and a wonderfully receptive sensorial system—of the qualities and the powers of a poet; but the Odes come from the man himself. You share his heart and its sorrows, his mind and its preoccupations; the group only interrupts the meditation

with its cry. No rhetoric, no eloquence; a style stripped of everything that is merely verbal, a simplicity of diction that is itself an appeal:

Le sable du chemin
Luisait cruellement;
Une chaleur amère
Fourmillait par mes membres.

Je faisais à quelqu'un
Des réponses polies.
Il y avait deux mois
Que je voulais mourir.

L'espace de la terre
Semblait se contracter;
L'horizon montagnoux
Me serrait comme un casque.

Il y avait deux mois
Déjà que nuit et jour
J'inventais des raisons
Pour différer la mort.

With these Odes are reprinted the *Prières* of *Le Premier Livre de Prières* and the fine "Ode à la Foule qui est ici." In this book, therefore, may be seen three stages of one thought.

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M. P.-J. Jouve's book, *Présences* (Crès, 3.50), is the work of a poet closely akin in spirit to M. Romains, and the latter's influence upon him is visible; but he is too intelligent—too ferociously intelligent, as readers of *Les Bandeaux d'Or* will know—not to free himself eventually from that. *Presences*? If you are sitting in a room, quiet and alone, you suddenly become conscious of a mysterious correspondence between yourself and the objects surrounding you. You are alive in the midst of an entanglement of forces. You may cultivate this sense of your place in a changing scheme of things until not a moment of your day will pass, not a movement, wherever you may be, will be made without its corresponding evocation in your mind of the mute and yet powerful participators in your existence. Finally, you will be able to project your own life by means of the images of all that is around you; that is, you eliminate yourself, and leave these *presences* to bear witness to you. When you have gone so far, the poetry in which you have been rendering your sensations will be difficult to understand, and men will

cry out on you. That is, I think, what has happened to M. P.-J. Jouve. He has been so intent on the mute companions of his existence that he has forgotten the critical spectator to whom every artist who wishes to be understood unconsciously refers. M. Jouve has been too original, too eager to give the "most naked expression" of an absolute impression; and he has not supplied the necessary links between the new and the old. You therefore feel, in reading his book, that you are in the presence of a poet who will satisfy you fully, and who yet never satisfies you, except with one or two poems, such as "Amour" and "Heures du Matin." But you are aware that in *Présences* is a whole mass of sensations, of keen observations, of emotions that have not had a fair chance in their passage through M. Jouve's selective intelligence and before his determination not to be led into imitation of what has been written in the past. Hence, as always when you attempt wholly to reject the stereotyped, leaving only the new, M. Jouve's hermeticism. But the "Hymne à un Enfant" and the series of poems called "Heures du Matin" already mentioned, have not this fault. The "Hymne" has other faults, but it is nevertheless a fine study of a child's psychological growth; and there are sun and air and movement in the "Heures du Matin." M. Jouve will not, however, go back to this manner. Rather should one expect and hope to see from him a fusion of the qualities of observation, "atmosphere," and clarity of these poems with the emotional and psychological qualities of "Amour" and "Retour"; in fact, these two poems do very nearly fulfil one's hope of him.

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M. Duhamel seems definitely destined for the theatre. Three plays stand to his name already: *La Lumière* (1911), *Dans l'Ombre des Statues* (*Nouv. Rev. Française*, 3.50), and *Le Combat*, produced last month at the Théâtre des Arts. The reproach made against the first was that it was too literary; the second redeemed the first, in this respect, and provoked the enthusiasm of M. Maurice Boissard of the *Mercure de France*, all the more astonished because *La Lumière* had displeased him; of the third, I only know as yet that certain contributors to POETRY AND DRAMA came back from Paris, after Easter, with its praise on their tongues. *Dans l'Ombre des Statues* is a very interesting play, with two fine acts, the first two, and a disappointing third. It is the eve of the inauguration of the monument to Emmanuel Bailly, a celebrated writer. Robert, his son, feels hostile to all the preparation that is going on around him. While in the library important personages are re-

hearsing pompous speeches, in another room of the house a professor of music is practising a cantata to honour the occasion; and elsewhere everybody is occupied. Robert is disgusted with it all. He has been brought up all his life in the shadow of his father, against whom he has always felt an antipathy; he has been trained and drilled into his father's shape by his mother and by Alain Mostier, the secretary and collaborator of Bailly, parasite and sycophantic hero-worshipper; and yet he feels an alien; he wishes to be left altogether out of the ceremony, in which, however, he is being forced to take a prominent part, naturally. But, hidden in a small room off the library, where the spirit of Bailly reigns like an incubus, is a little, bald old man who has been thrust there by Mostier because he would not go away when he had been informed that he could not be allowed to see Robert. This old man has brought for Robert a packet of letters which contain the proof that he is not the son of Bailly at all, but of an obscure provincial painter whom Mme Bailly had once loved, and who has just died. The packet is delivered, and Robert suddenly sees deliverance from his intellectual bondage: he will go away at once, and develop freely; become his own man, and not be merely the reflection of another. It is here that the drama takes the disappointing turn. Up to this point, as I see him, Robert is not necessarily a weakling. He is a repressed man, it is true; but, given a favourable moment, he might have become strong and independent. He might have left the house and have gone away for a time to nourish in peace his newly discovered fortitude. Whether he came back or not later would not matter; he would have found himself in either case. But nothing of this happens. A few words from his mother, and he sinks at her knees, broken, defeated. There seems no reason for it; and you expect him to go away. Perhaps there is a reason, a literary reason, connected with Ibsen's *Dolls' House*, and Villiers de l'Isle Adam's *Révolte*. I think M. Duhamel must have hovered some time over the direction of the last act of his play before he decided to give it its present turn. But the first two acts are good work, and the impression of them remains in the mind. Some effort is required to call up the third.

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You (and I could make the discoveries of which M. Vildrac tells us in his *Découvertes* (*Nouv. Rev. Française*, 3.50), if we had the . . . heart to. All you need do is to go into the streets. You will meet children, and see what they see, feel what they feel. You will find men who are only too glad to be glad,

only too happy to be good to one another. The world will seem to you an extraordinary complex of generousities. But, before you go into the street, it will be well to examine yourself to see whether you have within you what you are setting out to find. Otherwise, your search may be fruitless. You will, perhaps, evoke the hidden malice of men. But these discoveries come naturally to the author of the *Livre d'Amour* :

Mais si l'on avait assez d'amour.

One must have enough love.

M. Vildrac has transposed Wordsworth's "Reverie of Poor Susan," a poem made for him to translate, but made badly. Possibly, M. Vildrac would agree with Wordsworth that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," but he would not allow that natural goodness of heart and sympathy excuse bad workmanship. His "Pauvre Susanne" is better than Wordsworth's; M. Vildrac has made a poem out of Wordsworth's doggerel verses. It is too long to quote—unfortunately, because it contains a good lesson; but it begins like this :

Il y a une grive au coin de la rue. Depuis trois années qu'elle est là, dans une cage, cette grive chante au petit jour une chanson de prisonnier, une chanson pour elle toute seule.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud; it has sung for three years.

No, no, no !

These short prose pieces (prose poems, but the phrase is somewhat discredited) may seem slight, but they bring you into contact with a personality whom you cannot help liking; a man is speaking to you without emphasis, soberly, but with little trills of emotion. I am sure that those who have read the *Livre d'Amour* with pleasure will find in *Découvertes* the qualities that pleased them in the former book.

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There is the accent of a poet in M. Henri Herz's last book of poems, *À partés* (*Phalange*, 2 fr.); but his voice is the voice of one who steps out of the drama and daily spectacle of life in order to deliver an "aside," and you do not always follow him. A naive despair at the agony and death of each day; a still more naive astonishment that dawn should break once more; then despair again that the illusion of rebirth should be dispelled by contact with a topsy-turvy world,—these are attitudes. If it were not for his inability

to accept men and manners as they now are, he might take his tongue out of cheek (it being there really to prevent its crying out too loudly some of M. Herz's more intimate secrets), and his ironical gibes at what should be our virtues would become songs of gladness. There is a singer in M. Herz; but a bitter singer, who hovers behind a kind of cosmic disquietude. His rhythms are very cunning and supple; they are not encased within any ready-made form. He has the gift of imagery; and he has learned from Laforgue the trick of sudden juxtaposition of the sublime with the commonplace, by which one is made to criticise the other . . . ironically. M. Herz's poetry is a criticism of life in both senses of the word—the principle of being and the interaction of beings. I place *Les Apartés* by the side of his *Mécréants* and his *Quelques Vers*, three volumes which have not yet wholly revealed a poet.

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To be carried away at the age of twenty when all the world was looking towards him with confident expectancy of what his fine, ardent, generous mind would bring forth—and to be mourned thereafter by all the best spirits of his time, this has been the fate—unenviable, enviable—of Henri Franck, one of that phalanx of young Frenchmen whose wide culture seems to have acquired a more deeply human substance under the noble influence of Whitman. During the last two years of his life—years of sickness—he composed his poem, “La Danse devant l’Arche” (*Nouv. Rev. Française*, 3.50), breaking through, to do so, the habits of abstract thought which his philosophic training had imposed upon him. This poem is the poem of his youth and his enthusiasm, of his hope in life, and his friendship. There is no prescience of death in it, but an eager looking-forward into a wonderful future and a Biblical indignation at the abuses of the time. Henri Franck had an intellect in which were blended the best qualities of the French and Jewish mind, as they are to be found in André Gide and Spinoza. “Aimant tout, excellent en toutes choses,” says Mme de Noailles in the Preface to this book; “Henri Franck manque ici-bas à toutes les nobles causes qui l’eussent sollicité, car ses aptitudes égalaient sa curiosité.” In composing his poem, he found a sensibility which promised rich realisations. His prose (the articles printed at the end of this book) had already become the effective instrument of a penetrating intelligence.

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M. Guy-Charles Cros must be happy in *Les Fêtes Quotidiennes*, his

second book of poems, for in the chorus of voices which have welcomed it was that of M. Remy de Gourmont, and praise from M. Remy de Gourmont is worth having. He says: "Nothing but chance attracted me towards *Les Fêtes Quotidiennes* of Guy-Charles Cros—nothing, not even the name of his father (the friend of Verlaine, author of the famous *Hareng Saur* and inventor of the phonograph), and I may assure him that it is his poetry alone which has made upon me so profound an impression that I am as though tormented by it. I do not know whether it is admirable for all, but it is admirable for me, and that suffices me. This little volume has seemed to me for the last two days poetry itself. I revel in it; I see myself in it; I find myself in it; I have lived these emotions. It is a miracle, and it is the natural effect of an ingenuous sensibility. True poetry is known by this sign, that one believes that it has been written for you alone, that you are its hero, and I understand women who give way to it, and cry, 'But that is I!' That is the reward for having been sincere. . . . You who do not know, let your initiation to poetry be through *Les Fêtes quotidiennes*" (*Vers et Prose*, tome xxx). I add nothing to that, except that, in the *Mercur de France*, M. Jean de Gourmont said: "Ce livre, admirable, clôt le symbolisme: c'est la dernière, la suprême larme verlainienne."

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I have said little hitherto of the innumerable French reviews, which are the forcing-frames of the literature of France. First, the *Mercur de France*—but everybody reads the *Mercur de France*. M. Remy de Gourmont has published therein (March 16, April 1) thirteen remarkable sonnets in prose, of which number xi is:

Je parlerais des yeux, je chanterais les yeux toute ma vie. Je sais toutes leurs couleurs et toutes leurs volontés, leur destinée. Elle est écrite dans leur couleur, dont je n'ignore pas les correspondances, car les signes se répètent et les yeux sont un signe.

J'ai tiré autrefois l'horoscope des yeux, les yeux m'ont dit beaucoup de secrets, qui ne m'intéressent plus, et je cherche en vain celui des yeux que j'ai découverts, un jour d'hiver. Je le cherche et je ne voudrais pas le trouver.

Ni sous les paupières, ni entre les cils, dans l'iris clair où se mire le monde des formes, des couleurs et des désirs, je ne voudrais pas le trouver. J'aime mieux le chercher toujours.

Non comme on cherche sous l'herbe une bague tombée du doigt, mais comme on cherche une joie que la vie a façonnée lentement pour vous dans le mystère des choses.

The two best purely literary monthly reviews are *La Phalange* and *La Nouvelle Revue Française*; the criticism in both is informed and penetrating;

the literary contents always of a high, exceptional quality. In the *Phalange* I note (January) *Friedrich Hebbel, raconté par lui-même*; (February) *Les Séjours du Symbolisme*, by Henri Herz; *Remy de Gourmont à cinquante-cinq ans*, by Jean Florence; *Les Chansons Populaires du Ghetto*, by Raymond Geiger, with twenty-five songs, translated; (March) *Soirs de Flandre*, poems by Emile Verhaeren; *La Renaissance lyrique actuelle et la Tradition*, by Henri Herz.

In *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (January and March) *L'Esthétique des Trois Traditions* (i.e., *classique, catholique, monarchique*), by Albert Thibaudet ("the shrewdest, the subtlest, and the most cultivated of those who are not with us," says M. Henri Clouard in *La Revue Critique des Idées et des Livres*); (February) poems by Emile Verhaeren; (March) by Vielé-Griffin, *Le Geste de Saül*; by Paul Claudel, *Cantique de la Pologne*; Valery Larbaud's novel, *A.-O. Barnabooth: Journal d'un Milliardaire* (from February); (April) *Charles Blanchard*, an essay by Léon-Paul Fargue, on Charles-Louis Philippe, followed by an extract from *Charles Blanchard*; and by André Gide, *Les dix romans français que . . .*, to wit: *La Chartreuse de Parme, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, La Princesse de Clèves, Le Roman Bourgeois, Manon Lescaut, Dominique, La Cousine Bette, Madame Bovary, Germinal*, and . . . *La Marianne*, "de Marivaux, que je rougis de ne connaître pas encore." In this review, also, the articles by Henri Ghéon on new books of poems.

La Revue Critique des Idées et des Livres: political, royalist; literary standpoint, "classical"; its attitude, belligerent; the number of March 10 was devoted entirely to Stendhal, 144 pages. Between M. Henri Clouard in this review and M. Albert Thibaudet in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* an interesting debate on classicism and romanticism.

Two of the smaller—the "younger"—reviews which I always read with pleasure: *Les Bandeaux d'Or*—MM. Paul Castiaux, Théo Varlet, P.-J. Jouve, René Arcos, G. Chennevière, Luc Durtain: a belligerent attitude, too; in fact, the most interesting work being done at the present time is strongly partisan. *L'Effort Libre*—MM. J.-R. Bloch, Ch. Vildrac, Ch. Albert, Léon Bazalgette (the translator of Whitman), André Spire, P.-J. Jouve, Henri Herz, René Georgin: a valiant review, devoted to the uplifting of life and art. Then there are *L'Indépendance*, in which you may read MM. Francis Jammes, Paul Claudel, Georges Sorel (the syndicalist philosopher), Henri Clouard; *Le Temps Présent, La Renaissance contemporaine, L'Île*

Sonnante, Les Horizons, Les Cahiers du Centre (number for February to March, *La Jeunesse de Proudhon*, by Daniel Halévy, 150 pages), *L'Essor, Le Beffroi, Le Thyrse, Flamberge* (Belgian these two), and *La Flora*, wherein M. Lucien Rolmer, armed against ugliness, fights for grace in art. There are many others.

I have not mentioned *Vers et Prose*, the important anthological quarterly of MM. Paul Fort and Alexandre Mercereau, which carries the purest literature of France to the four corners of the world; and now fast on its heels comes the first number of another anthological quarterly, M. Nicolas Beauduin's *La Vie des Lettres* (176 pp.), whereof the first number (April) contains the names of the Comtesse de Noailles, Henri de Régnier, Emile, Verhaeren, F. Vielé-Griffin, André Gide, J.-H. Rosny Aîné, Han Ryner, Pierre Mille, Pouchkine, Byron, Rossetti, Walt Whitman (translated), C. Maclair, William Speth, T. de Visan, Auguste Aumaitre, Philéas Lebesgue, and Nicolas Beauduin. M. Beauduin, besides a series of poems, called *Le Poème des Trains*, contributes an "Essai de Synthèse," on *Les Directions de la poésie contemporaine*. M. Beauduin, once more, finds the finest lyrical expression of to-day in "paroxysme," which proceeds from "un état riche de la personne." M. Beauduin is very much at the mercy of his own temperament; but so are many other French poets. Happily, I am only a spectator; and I may, therefore, watch with equanimity the interchange of blows between them—which is at least a sign of life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—Paul Fort, *Choix de Ballades Françaises* (6 fr.), a volume of 600 well-filled and well-chosen pages; V.-E. Michelet, *Figures d'Evocateurs* (3.50), essays on Baudelaire, de Vigny, d'Aurevilly, de l'Isle Adam; Banville d'Hostel, *Le Semeur de Sable*, poems (3.50); Lucien Rolmer, *Les Amours Ennemies* (3.50); O.-W. Milosz, *Chefs-d'Œuvre lyriques du Nord* (3.50), translations from Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Rossetti, Goethe, Schiller (all from *Figuière*); René Arcos, *L'Île Perdue, poème dramatique* (*Mercur de France*, 3.50); O.-W. Milosz, *Miguel Mañara, mystère en six tableaux* (*Nouvelle Revue Française*, 2.50); Albert-Jean, *L'Ombre des Fumées, poésie* (3.50); René Georgin, *L'Âme du Fleuve, poème* (3.50); Luc Durtain, *Manuscrit trouvé dans une Île* (3.50) (Crès—well printed, these three books); Paul-Vaillant Couturier, *La Visite du Berger, poèmes* (Ed. du Temps Présent, 3.50); Fernand Hubert, *Les Inquiétudes* (Basset, 3.50); René Bizet, *Le Front aux Vitres* (*La Mêle*, 1 fr.); *Les Poètes d'Arthénice*, poèmes choisis de Maurice Chateau, Charles Conrardy, Louis du Soulier, Louis Hebras, August Lucius, Henry Maassen, Charles Mehn, Pierre Meyrat, Georges Turpin and Robert Vallet, with Preface by N. Beauduin (Ed. de la Revue *Arthénice*); Louis Carpeaux, *Pékin qui s'en va*, impressions of disappearing Pekin (Maloine, 3.50).

F. S. FLINT

ITALIAN CHRONICLE

THE Romantic movement in Italian poetry was a direct consequence of the great spiritual and intellectual revolution which took place at the end of the eighteenth century with Parini, Alfieri, and Foscolo. The newly awakened national consciousness needed a new mode of self-expression, such as that enunciated in the romantic theories of Mme de Staël's *Allemagne*, and in an article of hers published in a Milanese review, in which she exhorted Italians to study foreign literatures in order to liberate their own from the pedantry of tradition and the empty verbiage of literary preciosity.

When the first bluster of enthusiasm and exaggeration had passed, this school of young revolutionaries realised how alien to the Italian spirit was the importation of Northern myths and legends. This was no time for indulging in exotic fancies. Stable foundations were needed on which to build a new and modern national literature. By associating herself with modern European culture "Italy reacted against the solitariness of her intellectual stagnation. She entered into the field of European literature and took her place there, cutting away from herself the *Seicentismo*, the *Arcadia*, and the *Accademia*." *

Pioneers of this movement which led to the birth of modern Italian poetry were Foscolo, Manzoni, and Leopardi.

With Foscolo, the last of the Classics and the first of the Romantics, thought and word acquired a new dignity and became independent of form. He suppressed rime, cadence, strophe and metre. In the *Sepolcri* the thought appears naked, lit only by the fire of the imagination, while the line is broken up and freed from its traditional form. The result is the *verso sciolto*, a plastic rhythm full of unusual textures and sounds. Quoting again De Sanctis: "It is not artifice, but an interior voice, the music of the Universe, the great manner of Dante." While the *verso sciolto* became the medium for the new epic, the *carme*, in spirit not unlike its Latin progenitor, substituted the lyrical forms of sonnet and canzone, and opened the door to the *inno*, and to the poetics of the nineteenth century. It became the "lyrical poem of the new religious and moral world, elevating

* De Sanctis, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, 2 vols. (Milan: Treves 3.50.)

the soul of man into higher spheres of humanity and history, expressing his public life as patriot and the privacy of his domestic affections." It was for Manzoni to fuse these epic-lyrical elements into a whole, the *inno*. Mainly religious in conception, in it the Christian idea becomes the *motif* and substance of that modern poetry which was called Romantic; it represents a reaction against the cynicism of Foscolo and Alfieri, a reinstatement of the ideal, democratic in spirit, and the "evangelisation" of the famous triad *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*. A few years later Leopardi realised the complete duality of theology and metaphysics. His *Canti* are the expression of the scepticism of the nineteenth century, which led to Positivism in philosophy and realism in art, science, and history. "No beauty and no ugliness, no ideal and no real, no infinite and no finite; the idea one with content, content with form and only one thing, the living." On these foundations Italian poetry started building when the period of stress and war passed over, and Italy came again into her own.

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In compiling the *Antologia dei Poeti Italiani del XIX secolo*, the editor, Sig. Raffaello Barbiera, was confronted with a problem—viz. whether to give preference to the revolutionary, 1820-70, or to the contemporary period 1870-1912. Deciding on the former, his collection has become an evocation of the great unknown who sang of, and fell for, the Independence of Italy. Few of these, individually, are really great poets, but, transfused and irradiated by the fervour of faith and enthusiasm, their work forms the vast epic of the Second Italy. It was during the stagnating period of the eighties and the nineties that the consciousness of the Third Italy was born.

In Carducci classic, medieval, and romantic elements meet and are fused into a poetry of wide and noble issues, clear-cut, musical, emotional, spontaneous, and, above all, national. The simplicity and perfection of Carducci's verse, and still more perhaps that of his analytical and historical method of criticism, was widely felt in Italy; and, while modifying the watery verbiage of the Romantics, opened out a new field of thought and activity. Pascoli, following in his steps, applied the classic austerity and clarity of form to the painting of nature and peasant life in all its moods. The *Traduzioni and Riduzioni* from the Latin and the Greek lately published, and the *Poemi Conviviali*, as well as the *Canzoni del Re Enzo* and the *Inno a Roma*, are all transfused with a delicate spirit of modernity, which gives life and individuality to the stereotype forms used.

D'Annunzio has identified himself with the classic feeling, which is the perennial source of his inspiration, and lends grace and balance to all his writings, prose or poetry. This classicism, entirely personal in character, and partaking somewhat of the Alexandrian spirit, links Humanism to ideal conception of a Third Italy, mistress of the Mediterranean, celebrated in *Le Canzoni delle Gesta d'Oltremare* and in *La Nave*. In the latter we have a specimen of D'Annunzio's poetic drama, elaborate archæological reconstructions of a given period, deeply psychological in treatment and full of exquisite musical rhythms which often cause one to forget the prolixity and the intricacy of his language. This manner, which commenced with *Francesca da Rimini*, has been passing through various stages, combining, in increasing degree, music with the drama, until, in his latest works, the *Martyre de S. Sebastien* and *Parisina*, they have fused themselves into music-drama proper. It is interesting to compare these with the earlier dramas, *La Figlia di Jorio*, *La Fiaccola sotto il Moggio* in verse, *La Gioconda*, *La Città Morta*, *I Sogni delle Stagioni*, and *La Gloria* in rhythmic prose, this last closely approaching to Unanimism and a *théâtre d'idées*. The influence D'Annunzio has exerted on poetic drama is confined, however, to the usual channels; in fact, it seems as though only historical subjects are worthy of poetic treatment.

Among the playwrights who follow this tradition, Sem Benelli takes the lead with his *Maschera di Bruto*, *Cena delle Beppe*, *Amore dei Tre Re*. Each of these tragedies have proved artistic and poetic, as well as dramatic successes. The *verso sciolto* adapts itself admirably to strong and noble emotions, and the author has made the best use of it. His later work, however, shows a great deterioration. Butti's *Castello del Sogno*, Moschino's *Tristano e Isotta*, and Tumiatì's *Giovane Italia* further represent the tendencies of modern poetic drama, which is, as in these cases, rarelyactable, and does not introduce any new elements worthy of consideration.

The Neo-classicism of Carducci and D'Annunzio, while purifying poetry of the evils of Romanticism and sentimentality, was cold and intellectual, and did not express the vital problems of modern life. To fill this void, a school of lyrico-realism arose, which embodied the principles of Romanticism, while tempering them with the critical acumen of classicism. Some took their inspiration from the life of the people and the middle classes, depicting their characteristics, their emotions, and domestic habits; others, while adhering to the main principles, probed deeper into the heart of man

and society, considering their mutual relationship ; others again, mainly dialect poets, studied realism. The body of this poetry is large and steadily increases, but is well represented by a few writers like Enrico Panzacchi, Emilio Praga, M. Rapisardi, Severino Ferrari, and, among the living, Ada Negri, Lorenzo Stecchetti, Guido Mazzoni, Arturo Graf, Giovanni Marradi, Francesco Pastonchi, Fausto Salvatori and dialect poets like Salvatore di Giacomo, Cesare Pascarella, Trilussa, and Renato Fucini. With a few exceptions this poetry does not grip or hold one. Although in touch with large issues, it seems to be cramped and limited by the preoccupation of perfect form and melody, and only in some of the dialect work does one meet with the deepest inspiration and tensest expression.

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Against all this and against all stereotyped rules which fetter thought and tend to crystallise poetry into a beautiful but inanimate thing, the school of Futurist poets has proclaimed war. Though technically basing itself on the formulas dictated by Gustave Kahn, *vers libre* in Italy has a national and psychological significance which reaches beyond the question of poetry and metrics. It stands as a double symbol, of national and of individual liberty. In breaking away from the tyranny of a tradition enforced and sustained by centuries of verse-writing in every form, Futurist *vers libre* asserts independence and the necessity not to recreate, but to *create* a national poetry, simple and living expression of Modern Italy. Individually, it forces the poet to be independent of *clichés*. His inspiration and his power will increase with the breadth of his vision, and his communion with the newly evolved group consciousness. Futurist poetry constructs, in fact, a *vie unanime* on a new basis, in which beauty and truth are made subservient to self-expression. "*Vers libre*," Paolo Buzzi writes in *L'Enquête Internationale sur le vers libre*, allows every poet of every language to conceive his own verse, or rather his original strophe, to write a rhythm typical and personal, instead of putting on, as one may say, a uniform already used, and which obliges him to be, even in the best of cases, the disciple of some famous predecessor. Those," he continues, "who might be inclined to consider *vers libre* as a *tour-de-force* of some impulsive youths, who seek to use it as an easy way to emancipate themselves from the terrible difficulties of traditional verse and rime, would be falling into a capital error. *Vers libre* has a history which is the selfsame history of the human soul and its progress. . . . It is our aim to direct the social energies and the mind of the

masses. It is our aim to create poetry which can reveal all the musical mysteries of life in its highest and its deepest essence, poetry which will arrest and win by the simple and yet complex attraction of the rhythm which governs the poet's interior universe."

Self-advertisement, organisation, persecution, and the power and vitality of their message have won the battle. The most conservative of publishers is publishing Paolo Buzzi's last volume. The *Antologia dei Poeti Futuristi* has reached its thirty-third edition. If no other proof were needed that Italy is alive to poetry for poetry's sake, as perhaps never before, this remarkable book would prove it. It is the *Ars Poetica* of Futurism, and contains the work of some thirteen poets, all reaching a very high standard of achievement, worthy each of attentive study. I will just name C. Govoni, Aldo Palazzeschi—one of the first futurist poets, Paolo Buzzi, and F. T. Marinetti, the strongest and most typical examples of Futurist thought and *vers libre*. Let it not be imagined, however, that poetry is remaining static. With the renouncement of Futurism by G. P. Lucini, one of the great poets of the new era, the foundations have been laid of a new school—that of Neo Futurism.

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In analysing the tendencies of modern Italian verse it is necessary to draw the attention to the great work which criticism is doing in conjunction with poetry. With Carducci, De Sanctis, and Benedetto Croce, criticism has become an art, combining historical, æsthetic, and æsthetic-philosophical elements. While Carducci's historical methods, as exemplified in his *Prose*, cleared away the débris of the past and systematised criticism, De Sanctis in his history of Italian Literature, revalued old estimates and brought æsthetic standards to bear upon them, and, finally, Croce in his *Estetica* and in *La Critica* consolidates them into a system of criticism. The latter periodical, together with the *Marzocco*, the *Nuova Antologia*, the *Rassegna Contemporanea*, and the *Acropoli*, all conservative, and the *Voce*, philosophical and iconoclastic, the *Lacerba*, futuristic, form a body of reviews which for literary style and contents cannot be bettered. In reading these it is interesting, and not a little instructive, to note the attention and the perspicuity with which foreign poetry and literature is studied. In recent years, in fact, several publishers have started publishing translations of English poetry. Among these particularly worthy of note are D. Angeli's translations of Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*,

As You Like It, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and lately, *Macbeth*—all magnificent pieces of work. To these one can add Federico Oliviero's excellent translation of Edgar Allan Poe's Poetical Works, Luigi Siciliani's anthology of modern English poetry, entitled *Canti Perfetti*, a translation of Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*, and one of Elizabethan dramatists to be published shortly.

In this way the Italians are putting into practice, though in a different spirit, the tenets of the first Romantics. It seems a pity that, on her side, England does not also seek to enlarge the boundaries of her intellectual and artistic world.

ARUNDEL DEL RE

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REVIEWS

THE OXFORD BOOK OF VICTORIAN VERSE. Chosen by Arthur Quiller-Couch. (Clarendon Press, 6s. and 7s. 6d. net.)

WHO that cares for poetry does not enjoy the first hunt through a new anthology to see whether its maker has been wise enough to include his favourites? It is partly that sporting element which makes anthologies so popular. A solid collection of new poems by an unknown man demands a certain amount of self-surrender. If he is anything of a poet you must sit at his feet; but an anthology simply begs you to pick and choose. And here comes an old friend, Professor "Q.," with another great bunch of 779 poems, representing more poets than were included in all the centuries covered by *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. He comes smiling, but rather tired. He says the Victorian garden is an enormous one. He just picked the best he could find. No doubt there are others, but "they must await another rescuer. . ." "He who attempts on his contemporaries such assaying as these pages imply, attempts what no man can do."

Such genial frankness ought to prevent us from carping. When we proceed to state that the book has nothing like the same value as the *Book of English Verse*, we are merely saying what its editor would be the first to admit, since we all recognise that judging contemporary poetry is, in any final sense, as impossible as it is to decide the character of a man when he passes you in the street.

The only quarrel the best critics had with Sir Arthur's first collection was that it was marred at the end by the miscellaneous assortment from living poets. Now again, with this new book, it is impossible to avoid asking what the last seventy pages (there are 1,023 in all) have to do with Victorian poetry. It almost looks as if he originally intended to stop at the right place, so wide is the breach between the clear-cut, carefully wrought sonnets of Lord Alfred Douglas on one page, and Synge's raw lines:

You've plucked a curlew, drawn a hen,
Wash'd the shirts of seven men.

on the next. Lord Alfred Douglas's sonnets might well have stood for the last word of the "Æsthetic Movement" and the end of the Victorian Era; while Synge's crude violence, ephemeral as its intrinsic value will doubtless appear, was nevertheless the new flag—a sort of Jolly Roger—for the Georgians.

Perhaps in fifty years' time our children will find in W. B. Yeats the real link between the old order and the new. Yeats himself seems to have regarded that wonderful book, *The Wind among the Reeds*, as the last word in pure lyricism. Its atmosphere is intensely rarefied. It is the hitherto untrod mountain peak. That way we can go no higher. Yet, interestingly enough, it set the example of modern technique,

and its loose musical rhythms have been attempted, with varying degrees of success, ever since. But the very titles of the other books that followed it, *Discoveries*, *Insurrections*, are indicative of the sudden change wrought under Synge's influence, and Yeats himself begins a fresh chapter in the poems published with *The Green Helmet*. Broadly speaking, Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke, Harold Monro, James Stephens, and others found in this Victorian Anthology, have nothing whatever to do with Victorian poetry and should not have been included. No man can serve Victoria and George at the same time.

It is a pity, for the book begins at exactly the right place. The great voices—Blake, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats and (grudgingly) Byron—are silent, and we step down from another mountain peak into the hermit's cell of Landor, who "strove with none, for none was worth his strife," to see, far below, the habitation of Mr Samuel Rogers: not the bank in Cornhill, nor the residence in Stoke Newington: but the villa of his poetic fancy:

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willow brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

* * * * *
The village church among the trees,
Where first our marriage vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze
And point with taper spire to Heaven.

And suddenly we know we are in the smug suburb of Victorianism, and it is difficult to believe that Blake and Shelley have lived.

When poetry becomes fashionable the Muse goes into exile; and the art became highly fashionable all through the Victorian Era, as those beautifully bound copies of "The Idylls of the King," "In Memoriam," and the works of Mr Rogers, Mrs Hemans and Eliza Cook ("Phœbus! what a name!") still testify. No amount of filial piety on the part of 'Q.' will save the word Victorian from its unenviable connotations. The Muse is seldom left without a witness, even though the atmosphere be stifling, but no purpose can be served by the pretence that the age of Hood, Longfellow, Arnold, Patmore, was a great age in the history of poetry. The best work was essentially that of pioneers like Browning and Meredith, or men who were completely out of sympathy with their time, like Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne and Whitman.

All the same, we may as well admit that this business of packing and labelling in eras is a method "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," for it tends to rob a poet of his own soul and render him little more than a glorified megaphone. Poetry is the expression of the individual human spirit, and in the purest and truest appreciation the study of environment should always be something of an after-thought.

Judged even from this standpoint, nothing but a distorted sense of proportion will permit us to regard the poets of the Victorian Era as equals with those of the age which preceded it. To do so is to betray a stunted conception of the function of poetry. Great poetry is based on what may be roughly described as universal ideas.

Lesser poetry is based on parochial ideas. The poets of a hundred years ago were concerned with such ideas as liberty, awe and reverence for nature, the beauty that is truth, the freedom of the human spirit. They endeavoured to find the heart of life by their own ways, and not along the dusty high-roads of outworn thought. The characteristic poets of the Victorian Era wrote under the dominance of such ideas as the Christian religion, the sanctity of wedded life, and a thousand lesser theories which have, not truth but comfort for their end.

Really anthologies prove nothing, however interesting they may be for exhibition purposes. You meet a poet in an anthology much as you meet a friend at a garden party. It is pleasant enough, but you must be superficial if you are entirely satisfied by a chance meeting with a delightful person. And it is well to remember that poetry is not a performance. A very minor poet may cherish some dainty emotion and may, with great travail, produce a tiny lyric which the conscientious anthologist cannot neglect, while the ideal of sedulous perfection may never enter the mind of a great poet, as it probably never occurred to Shelley or Browning, much to the dismay of the anthologist, who obviously twists and turns in his endeavours to be representative.

MAX PLOWMAN

THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEORGE MEREDITH. With some Notes by G. M. Trevelyan. (Constable, 7s. 6d. net.)

THOUGH it be a truism to say it, there is indeed in the English people a deeply-rooted distrust and dislike of poetry. The Germans, when they publish a collected edition of a classical author, invariably lead off with his poems, however bad they may be; but in English collected editions the poems sneak in ashamedly at the tail of the edition—presumably so that an omission to buy them will not leave any obvious gap. Thus any author who writes both prose and verse must expect to have his verse overshadowed and treated as a diversion of his leisure hours. No one of our great poets has suffered more cruelly from this absurd attitude than Meredith. Year by year the tradition grew that all his works were difficult, but, of course, as the poetry of a novelist is never serious, it would be waste of time to attempt to understand that as well as his prose.

Now this question raises that of the respective merits of prose and verse; and because there is no space to discuss it here, I propose to give it an answer quite brusquely—an answer that, I know, is open to innumerable objections and shows the worst form of vicious simplification. Verse is intended by higher artificiality of form to produce a more vivid and more natural effect than prose. Hence it follows, that if a man have within him any lyric genius at all, his verse will be of greater value than his prose. However many examples may be adduced to prove the falsity of this contention, I submit that it holds good in the case of Meredith. The vigour and intensity of his thought were, in his novels, diffused over pages of dialogue, social satire, padding necessary to make the story intelligible, and so forth: by the use of verse, which compels a man to be concise, he succeeds in rendering his emotion at once intelligible.

It is almost too late in the day to enter upon a panegyric of various poems. "Love in the Valley" remains and will remain the chief lyric of youth that England gives to the world. There is health in every line, and love of things, freedom from the twilight fancies and rich, unhealthy images that beset a mind in an unsatisfactory body. "Modern Love" shows a problem of unhappiness approached in an unmorbid spirit. The poet is confronted by a difficulty, and restlessly in poem after poem he tries to reach some solution, but he never loses his balance or his grip on that life in the world of tangible things which alone is worth living. In all these poems there is an ecstasy betrayed in the mention of objects and physical actions :

Many swarms of wild bees descended on our fields :
Stately stood the wheatstalk with head bent high :
Big of heart we laboured at storing mighty yields,
Wool and corn, and clusters to make men cry !
Hand-like rushed the vintage ; we strung the bellied skins
Plump, and at the sealing the Youth's voice rose :
Maidens clung in circle, on little fists their chins ;
Gentle beasties through pushed a cold long nose.

Meredith's was a mind that strove to set itself in harmony with the material world : we see in his poetry no cloudy battling of thought with thought, no cultivation of misty fancies for their beauty, apart from their reality ; and it is because of this that his poetry should be treasured in a time, happily passing, when poets seek their "ivory towers" (a cliché to describe an age of cliché) and imagine material for poetry. The greatest poetry is not written to give pleasure : it more nearly resembles letting blood than any other operation.

Mr Trevelyan's notes are not unnecessary, and for this Meredith must, in all seriousness, be severely blamed :

That was the chirp of Ariel
You heard, as overhead it flew,
The farther going more to dwell,
And wing our green to wed our blue.

Mr Trevelyan notes that "the farther the sound travels through the sky, the more it seems to dwell in our hearts," and doubtless he is right, though I had always supposed it to mean that the farther Ariel travelled the longer he stopped when he did stop. "Green" and "blue" mean our earthly and our heavenly natures, a puzzle absolutely impenetrable unless one has the key, and I am convinced that Mr Trevelyan had to ask Meredith the meaning. The notes fill thirty-eight pages of small print, and are invaluable. It was both wise and courageous to include them.

RICHARD BUXTON

POEMS, NEW AND OLD. By Henry Newbolt. (John Murray, 5s. net.)

WHAT, after all, is patriotism? Here we have an officious grey paper cover to a volume of verse, announcing that its author, Mr Henry Newbolt, reached "the fore-front of English patriotic poets" in 1897. What is patriotism? And then, after that, what is a patriotic poet?

Patriotism is no quality of ours. Loyalty is. Patriotism resides in small, plucky nations. One might use the word of ancient Greece, of Hungary, of Switzerland. The Roman *patria*, in the days of the kings and the republic, had a rich, full meaning; the French *patrie* survives—emasculate. The Englishman to-day could not be patriotic if he tried. The speeches that Shakespeare wrought for Henry V are patriotic; the trumpet-call rings through them, their gravid phrases spring like rich pasture from the mould of English meadows. "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers," is the breviary of patriotism. Yet, even if the deeds of history belie the insinuation, it must be confessed that Shakespeare composed the speeches; that Shakespeare it was who told the yeomen of England to "be copy now to men of grosser blood, and teach them how to war." The poet as often as not makes the patriot an accessory after the fact.

True patriotic utterance is only inspired at its best by the antagonism of terrible odds. It is only in forlorn hopes that men need the passion of the patriot to sustain them; and for that reason much patriotic poetry is couched in terms of threats and boasts. The patriotism of many of Shakespeare's characters is of that kind. *Quand même* is its key-note. When David Garrick—showy man of the theatre as he was—wrote that sturdy British classic, "Hearts of Oak," he naturally could not resist the intimidating attitude of the schoolboy pugilist. "We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again!" he shouts, and the line is repeated to a chorus of hammering tankards. Our patriotism has declined because the possibility of it is gone. We are not—not yet, at least—fighting an implacable foe for hearth and home. Our wars for the past century have been concerned, as Mr Price Collier has gently reminded us, with keeping what we have taken. The true Boadicean spirit of patriotism has fled: we fight for the preservation of a vast Imperial business concern. Our deeds are often deeds of splendid courage, of surpassing valour; but the face of the earth must change before we can again be patriotic. The bark of the top-dog has hardly a pleasant sound. When one hears them, as one so often does, blatantly declaimed by a strident reciter, there is a matchless arrogance in the words from Mr Newbolt's "Ballad of John Nicholson":

We brook no doubt of our mastery,
We rule until we die.

But Mr Newbolt is not fond of this kind of bark. So far as the "patriotic" part of this collection goes, he is largely content to set forth, in swinging verse, records of great deeds by valiant seamen of the past. He catches the atmosphere of the Drake and Nelson days, but he is more sincere and convincing and certainly more "patriotic" in any sense of the word in those pieces where he flaunts the spirit of the school and the up-surging ambitions of youth. Of these, "Vita Lampada," with its

"Play up, play up, and play the game!" and the verses entitled "Clifton Chapel," with its profession of faith—

To set the cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize,
To honour, while you strike him down,
The foe that comes with fearless eyes—

voice most vigorously the religion of sportsmanship and loyalty that springs from our public schools, which has replaced that frenzied "patriotism" whose extinction I hope I have demonstrated.

In the sea-pieces, the simple ballad styles and well-marked rhythms beget simplicity of narration, and banish the idea of deeply poetic language, and yet, again, it is when Mr Newbolt is most poetic that he strikes the sincerer note: for example, in his address to England ("Ode for Trafalgar Day"):

... Yet when the noon is past, and thy delight,
More delicate for these good hundred years,
Has drunk the splendour and the sound of fight
And the sweet sting of long-since vanished fears,
Then, England, come thou down with sterner lips
From the bright world of thy substantial power,
Forget thy seas, thy ships,
And that wide echoing dome
To watch the soul of man in his dark hour
Redeeming yet his dear lost land of home....

It is almost surprising to step from this to this:

She was clear of Monte Cristo, she was heading for the land,
When she spied a pennant red and white and blue;
They were foemen, and they knew it, and they'd half a league in hand,
But she flung aloft her royals and she flew.

Which is simply metrical, and not particularly virile, prose. It is the story that the writer wanted to tell, yet Mr Kipling, with his flowery crop of Bible English, would have made a vivid snap-shot of it, rhythms and all. Mr Newbolt avoids metaphors in these ballads, but his style has not the force to rivet his images without them. He uses his rhythms well: for example, in this first verse of "The Fighting *Téméraire*":

It was eight bells ringing,
For the morning watch was done,
And the gunner's lads were singing
As they polished every gun.
It was eight bells ringing,
And the gunner's lads were singing,
For the ship she rode a-swinging
As they polished every gun.

Here the metrical music alone, and the trick of repetition, endow the simple narrative with the pictorial quality of poetry. But the temptation of purely musical rhythms can go too far. Poe used his rhythms in a mysterious way that implied music without making one wonder what the cadences that prompted him might be. On the principle, perhaps, that the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it, Mr Newbolt goes further. In the delightful piece entitled "Gavotte (Old French)" he follows so closely the rhythmical plan of a thousand-and-one old dance airs that, instead of appreciating the literary charm and grace of it, we find ourselves vaguely searching for the actual tune that inspired him :

... Willowy billowy now they're bending,
Low they're bending
Down-dropt eyes;
Stately measure and stately ending,
Music sobbing, and a dream that dies.

This is eight bars of four-four time, with the exact phrasing of the gavotte. The dance of "Imogen" in the poem of that title is much more subtly and adroitly suggested, the music is evasive, as all good poetry's music should be. Poetry should inspire music, not recall it.

There is much variety in the verses that complete this volume. Many of the sentimental pieces come strangely and exotically from the ballad-singer, and indeed do not reach a high level. In other pieces, showing the more academic qualities of criticism and parody, one is again surprised to think that this can be the poet of action. The "Essay on Criticism" is written in Pope's couplets, and in Pope's sterile manner, but without Pope's polish. It is in labour with parodied quotations, and incidentally rebukes one "Rudyard" for an error of judgment. In "The Sufi in the City" Mr Newbolt voices, in the quatrains of Fitzgerald, a kind of super-Omar doctrine. But obviously he is at his happiest when he is liting along, telling a lively story of a tough sea-fight, with opening lines that would not frighten a child, as thus :

The wind was rising easterly, the morning sky was blue,
The Straits before us opened wide and free;
We looked towards the Admiral, where high the Peter flew,
And all our hearts were dancing like the sea.

It is not patriotism, and it is not poetry, but it is fine, manly stuff.

BASIL WATT

LOVE-POEMS AND OTHERS. By D. H. Lawrence. (Duckworth, 5s. net.)

MR LAWRENCE, in a recent review of *Georgian Poetry*, 1911-1912, has in reality written so complete an exposition of the outlook of which this book of his own is another expression, that it is difficult to resist the temptation to quote. He identifies himself with a group of men who are writing at a time when the world is freshly awakened from a deep depression. "I think I could say every poem in the book is

tinged with a love of the marvellous, a joy in natural things, as if the poet were a child for the first time on the sea-shore, finding treasures." Nothing could be truer of these *Love-poems and Others*. The poet passes his hands over his body in an ecstasy of self-realisation. He gazes through the tangled web of the world and finds it strange and very beautiful.

THE EARTH

Oh Earth, you spinning clod of earth,
And then you lamp, you lemon-coloured beauty;
O Earth, you rotten apple rolling downward,
Then brilliant Earth, from the burr of night in beauty
As a jewel-brown horse-chestnut newly issued:—
You are all these, and strange, it is my duty
To take you all, sordid or radiant tissued.

MEN

Oh labourers, oh shuttles across the blue frame of morning,
You feet of the rainbow balancing the sky!
Oh you who flash your arms like rockets to heaven,
Who in lassitude lean as yachts on the sea-wind lie!
You who in crowds are rhododendrons in blossom,
Who stand alone in pride like lighted lamps;
Who grapple down with work or hate or passion,
Take strange lithe form of a beast that sweats and ramps:
You who are twisted in grief like crumpled beech-leaves,
Who curl in sleep like kittens, who kiss as a swarm
Of clustered vibrating bees; who fall to earth
At last like a bean-pod: what are you, oh multiform?

Above all he is interested in himself. The world is not much to him unless he is there to see it. He is too passionately in love with it. Though he draw a distinction between passion and love, his own love is nothing if it is not passionate, almost to sensuality, even about insensate things.

AWARE

Slowly the moon is rising out of the ruddy haze,
Divesting herself of her golden shift, and so
Emerging white and exquisite; and I in amaze
See in the sky before me, a woman I did not know
I loved, but there she goes and her beauty hurts my heart;
I follow her down the night, begging her not to depart.

But although sensuality is so dominant a characteristic of the book, the distinction between love and simple sex-passion is nevertheless realised, the love-poems tingling with an emotion which is creative, creative for the lover, and not a mere end in itself. Yet it is the passion of the moment which absorbs him and which is expressed, an

immense personal desire, which in its intensity almost stammers in the lines. There is nothing of the pessimism which characterised the thought of the period Mr Lawrence despises, nor of the mawkishness which was lavished elsewhere over "bought kisses" and love's "sweet unrest." It is at least a virile, if as yet a somewhat self-centred emotion which finds utterance.

WEDDING MORN

The morning breaks like a pomegranate
In a shining crack of red,
Ah, when to-morrow the dawn comes late
Whitening across the bed,
It will find me watching at the marriage gate
And waiting while light is shed
On him who is sleeping satiate,
With a sunk, abandoned head.

And when the dawn comes creeping in,
Cautiously I shall raise
Myself to watch the morning win
My first of days,
As it shows him sleeping a sleep he got
Of me, as under my gaze,
He grows distinct, and I see his hot
Face freed of the wavering blaze.

Then I shall know which image of God
My man is made toward,
And I shall know my bitter rod
Or my rich reward.
And I shall know the stamp and worth
Of the coin I've accepted as mine,
Shall see the image of heaven or of earth
On his minted metal shine.

* * * * *

LIGHTNING

I felt the lurch and halt of her heart
Next my breast, where my own heart was beating;
And I laughed to feel it plunge and bound,
And strange in my blood-swept ears was the sound
Of the words I kept repeating,
Repeating with tightened arms, and the hot blood's blindfold art.

Her breath flew warm against my neck,
Warm as a flame in the close night air;

And the sense of her clinging flesh was sweet
Where her arms and my neck's blood-surge could meet.
Holding her thus, did I care
That the black night hid her from me, blotted out every speck?

I leaned me forward to find her lips,
And claim her utterly in a kiss,
When the lightning flew across her face,
And I saw her for the flaring space
Of a second, afraid of the clips
Of my arms, inert with dread, wilted in fear of my kiss.

* * * * *

The poet is obviously more interested in what he has to say than in the manner of saying it. Yet the technique of these verses is not the least interesting of their qualities. Their undoubted beauty of sound and rhythm appears to be the direct product of personality rather than of any definite cunning or conscious skill. Somebody writing of Shelley once remarked that even genius was no excuse for carelessness, and quoted the line—

For each one was interpenetrated—

as an example of culpable negligence. But the gossamer weaving of the verses of "The Sensitive Plant" necessitated and was not marred by their irregularities. The matter made the form; they were inseparable. And to a great extent the same may be said of these poems. But genius is a fickle lady in whom to place one's entire confidence and, while recognising that a greater intensity has been attained by allowing the lines to hesitate and halt as they do, it must be admitted that the magic of words has occasionally badly deserted them. What, for instance, can be made of the last line of the following four?

Almost I hated her, she was so good,
Hated myself, and the place, and my blood,
Which burned with rage, as I bade her come
Home, away home, ere the lightning floated forth again.

The quotations already given show Mr Lawrence's technique at its best.

It seems hardly necessary to speak separately of the dialect poems. They are more dramatic than the others, but possess the same essential characteristics. Moreover, the dialect has been achieved without any loss of sincerity.

At present Mr Lawrence is full of the inquisitive egotism of a new birth. Though he writes with the fervour of a mystic, it is the essential reality of himself, of his own body, and of the things around him which moves him.

JOHN ALFORD

THE VENTURERS AND OTHER POEMS. By Vivian Locke Ellis, 21, York Buildings, Adelphi. (1s. net.)

"THE Venturers," from which this slight but charming volume takes its title, belongs to a favourite convention of English verse—the mysterious-romantic. It is the convention in which poems like Keats's "La Belle Dame" and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" are enshrined, and its employment requires high gifts of the poet who uses it. Mr Ellis does not quite create that atmosphere of impalpable reality, of calm and well-ordered mystery which is something of the secret of this type of poem; but in a lesser way, in a sphere more definite and less poetical, he does succeed, and give us a poem touched with some of the radiance of romantic art. The lines—

Some vessel gaunt and spare :
What is that shadow in the outer harbour
Was not at sunset there,
Nor in the roads, nor on the white horizon ?

No one hath seen her come,
Or heard her dropping sail or speaking pilot ;
Or noise of muffled drum,
Her grapnel loaded on the midnight water—

illustrate the intention and art of the poem. It is, perhaps, the charm of fairy-tales severed from incident and action and distilled in lyrical mood which makes the effectiveness of this kind of verse.

There are some sonnets in the book which, though they lean rather on the Shakespearean model, are rich and deep. The song "Eyes can no Falsehood Tell" has a nice finish and elegance :

Eyes can no falsehood tell,
'Tis only lips forswear.
None in thy sight could dwell
And faith not there.

I would thine eyes were mine,
Then thou their truth should see ;
And have that perfect sign
Of love from me.

But wanting thine eyes' flame,
Though my heart burn as true,
I must use words, the same
As false ones do ;

I must for thy dear sake
Tune those old strings again,
That now had better break
Than speak in vain.

E. S.

LYRICS. By Lady Margaret Sackville. (Herbert & Daniel, 3s. 6d. net.)

THE *Lyrics* of Lady Margaret Sackville show just those qualities one has come to expect of her verse. Melody and a delicate imagery are possessed of nearly all alike. There are few bad lines and fewer still bad poems. Moreover, she does not let sincerity to her emotions usurp the place of sincerity to her art. For this one is duly thankful on remembering how often a mere circumlocutory description of an emotional flux is passed off as poetry. Frequently she sings of wanderers and wanderings, but these are the least satisfactory pieces in the book. Take, for instance, "The Pedlar":

I am a merchant of strange wares!
The market-places know me not;
Yet with all laughing wayfarers,
High and low, I cast my lot.

Too much has already been written between the day of Shakespeare and the day of the drawing-room ballad-monger on themes such as this. She is most pleasing when she is most artificial, as in "Le Voyage en Cythère," a dramatic poem in the style of "The Pierrot of the Minute," or the following charming little song:

THE RUNAWAY

I've lost my favourite dream, good lack!
She was so swift, I might not hold her!
I run hot-footed on her track,
But she has wings on either shoulder—
She fled from me last spring,
And now the summer's done:
Out upon the crafty thing!—
She has wings and I have none.

Were there no living poets of the other sex, Lady Margaret Sackville's name would be of literary pre-eminence. But it must also be admitted that the spirit of true poetry would probably then be dead. The difference between these verses and the work of any of the foremost poets of the day is simply this, that the output of personality which has been an essential factor in the creating of the latter is here almost entirely lacking. This is no reflection on the personality of the author. It should be understood merely as a footnote to the history of sex and art.

It seems that the creative faculty of woman is canalised, and art is not its channel. Among the names of the great poets of all time, only one is that of a woman, and this quasi-exception appears, on further examination, rather to support than to contravene that contention. It is of no avail for the ultra-feminist to murmur of the power of independence and of education. Poetry was not born in a class-room. But women will doubtless continue to devise good verses, and the contemporary public—such of it as is interested—will rightly continue to applaud. Lady Margaret Sackville herself appears to have realised this. She does not take her muse too seriously.

It is all in the Dedication: "To any who may care for them—these merest records of passing moods."

J. A.

A BOY'S WILL. By Robert Frost. (Nutt, 1s. 6d. net.)

MR ROBERT FROST'S poetry is so much a part of his life that to tell his life would be to explain his poetry. I wish I were authorised to tell it, because the one is as moving as the other—a constant struggle against circumambient stupidity for the right of expression. Be it said, however, that Mr Frost has escaped from America, and that his first book, *A Boy's Will*, has found an English publisher. So much information, extrinsic to the poems, is necessary. Their intrinsic merits are great, despite faults of diction here and there, occasional inversions, and lapses, where he has not been strong enough to bear his own simplicity of utterance. It is this simplicity which is the great charm of his book ; and it is a simplicity that proceeds from a candid heart :

MY NOVEMBER GUEST

My Sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be ;
She loves the bare, the withered tree ;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks, and I am fain to list :
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow ;
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

Other poems almost or quite as perfect as the one above are : "A Late Walk," "To the Thawing Wind," "Mowing," "Going for Water," "Reluctance." Each poem is the complete expression of one mood, one emotion, one idea. I have tried to find in these poems what is most characteristic of Mr Frost's poetry, and I think it is this : direct observation of the object and immediate correlation with the emotion—spontaneity, subtlety in the evocation of moods, humour, an ear for silences. But behind all is the heart and life of a man, and the more you ponder his poems the more convinced you become that the heart is pure and the life not lived in vain.

F. S. F.

DEATH AND THE PRINCESS. A Morality. By Frances Cornford. (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 2s. net.)

THE argument of this "Morality" is as follows. The people of a valley city are terror-stricken at the ravages of a dragon who lives in a cavern among the neighbouring wooded hills. This dragon is served by a number of red witches who roam the land at night, soul-snatching. There is a fable that when a young girl shall offer herself as a sacrifice, the land shall be freed of its pest. Among the hills there live a people who, unlike the plain-men (worshippers of Mithras), put their faith in a certain cloven-footed, Pan-like deity, the King of the Woods, and laugh at the existence of the soul-eating dragon. The worship of Mithras, with its priests and dreams of immortality, is in contrast to the cult of Nature, personified in the King of the Woods. The valley folk are governed by a Princess who appears never to have heard of the existence of the dragon. During the early part of the play the stage, which represents the front of the dragon's cave, is occupied by certain rustics who explain the state of affairs. Night falls, and a valley youth, who has been converted to a belief in the King of the Woods, takes his place by the cavern mouth in order to disprove the existence of the dragon and his red women. He falls asleep, and the witches appear and steal his soul. They fly on the appearance of the Princess, who has escaped from the palace and is airing herself in the woods with her pet dwarf. These latter hide at the approach of a crowd of peasants assembled to witness the advent of their deliverer, whom the priests of Mithras have undertaken to discover and escort to the spot. The priestly procession approaches, but the deliverer is lacking. The Princess, moved by the words of the High-priest, offers herself as the necessary sacrifice, and is left by the crowd and the clergy to enter the cavern. Her courage deserts her at the sound of roars from within, and on the return of the witches from their nocturnal prowlings she sinks senseless to the ground. Dawn breaks, the Princess revives, and is half converted to the belief in the King of the Woods by the "shrewd dignity" of some mountain people. They depart, and the appearance of the King of the Woods himself finally persuades her that the dragon is non-existent and the women are fictions of men's minds. At the summons of the Princess the fictitious witches appear from the cavern, and, bewailing their fate, take their departure. The Princess enters the cavern fearlessly, the King of the Woods disappears again, and the curtain is rung down by the family of mountain people who have returned with their children from gathering king-cups at a neighbouring stream.

The original should not be found more wearisome than this outline. To those who have progressed so far:—The play is written at odd times in prose, *vers libre*, blank verse, rhymed couplets, and lyrical stanzas. The formlessness of its construction and its wavering between characterisation and symbolism could only be excused by great beauty and strength of treatment in the writing. These qualities, however, are far to find, though some of the lyrical portions bear a shadow of the charm which distinguished Mrs Cornford's early volume of poems. Simplify the more philosophical aspects of the story, reverse the moral, and the piece would assume the character of a Christmas fairy-play. Admirers of Mrs Cornford's lyrics will be disappointed, but, on realising what she has attempted, perhaps hardly surprised.

J. A.

SONGS OF ALBAN. By Emilia Stuart Lorimer. (Constable, 2s. 6d. net.)

READERS of the July number of the *Poetry Review*, 1912, will already be acquainted with some of the best of Miss Lorimer's work.

We have little to add to the Prefatory Note in that number by Mr Harold Monro in which he aptly sums up the peculiar characteristics of her thought and her technique. Though she obviously belongs to the Celtic school, and has derived most of her imagery from the common sources, nevertheless her poetry is transfused by her individuality, and has a life apart and independent of school or traditions. Her manner, though wilfully artificial, appears the inevitable medium for expressing those "phosphorescences of emotion" from which her inspiration arises. Her strength lies in the sheer force and beauty of her language. Compound words, dialect words, and inflections, though used with great frequency, scarcely ever jar or tire, but co-operate in the general melodic and rhythmic scheme. Miss Lorimer is, perhaps, not a great poet; rarely she reaches the level of Fiona Macleod; but, for those who feel their peculiar Celtic charm, the *Songs of Alban* will evoke a distant dream-world, full of strange, half-human creatures and dreamy saints, surrounded by the eternal croon and dance of the grey sea.

A. d. R.

NARCISSUS. By Edward Storer. (Priory Press, 2s. net.)

WHY does one, reading Mr Edward Storer's *Narcissus*, think again and again of *The Shropshire Lad*? There is no other similarity between the two books than these: a unity of inspiration throughout the whole, and legibility, *i.e.*, one may read Mr Storer's brief snatches of song—fifty-two, one for each week of the year—without weariness. If the song does not interest you, it is very short; and, if it does, then you are repaid. I do not know whether it is ancient comradeship, but certainly I found pleasure in Mr Storer's book; and it seems to me that *one* may find pleasure in it. If the poems given here do not charm, probably none will.

O Dawn, have pity! Move your stealthy wings
With swifter pace.
Had you the hunger for the earth that I
Have for her face,
How eagerly through this slow night
Would you then race!

I feel the grave-worms creeping in my brain—
Blessed you are!
Ere such rare memories you find again
You will search far!

Will nothing of us live in years to come,
And not one word survive our passion's close?
Time, to destroy us, must stretch out his hand,
Our love may scent his fingers like a rose.

Lover's eyes, lover's eyes,
Such a look of awe there lies
In the gaze of men who are
Home from strange fair lands afar.

The subject—love and its fleetingness—is well worn ; but how discreet Mr Storer has been ! So discreet, indeed, that I dare avow he has found a personal accent ; a little more care, and he might have spoken the ultimate word and become a classic (one thinks of Moréas's *Stances*). But I do not suppose that he has cared. He has stolen fifty-two wistful moments from those gaieties which have made him famous (where such fame is worth having). They were the poignant silences between two laughs ; he has filled them with what he really had at heart. I think he was sincere.

F. S. F.

THE BOOK OF LIES. WHICH IS ALSO FALSELY CALLED BREAKS. By Frater Perdurabo. (Wieland & Co., 20s.)

CREATION and destruction of Gods has been for centuries mankind's favourite religious mania and philosophical exercise. *The Book of Lies* is a witty, instructive, and wholly admirable collection of paradoxes, in themselves contradictory, summing up and illustrating various experiments in God-making. *Frater Perdurabo*, however, has not written a philosophical or mystical treatise ; on the contrary, his book leaves one with a feeling of intense exhilaration and clearheadedness. The book cannot be judged by the mere reading of excerpts ; nor can it be read straight through. Indeed if one is really desirous to appreciate its subtleties, this should not be attempted before 12 p.m. To be carried about and discussed at leisure, to annoy, repel, stimulate, puzzle and interest, are evidently some few of its functions. Stupendously idiotic and amazingly clever, it is at the same time the quintessence of paradox and simplicity itself ; yet when all this is said one is still far from the core, for just when one thinks to have discovered it, one finds that many obvious beauties of thought and expression have been overlooked, others misinterpreted. Sometimes one is even doubtful if the author himself could translate into definite terms the exact meaning of his aphorisms and paradoxes without detracting from the value of the book as artistic expression of his personality. This is, however, an individual appreciation. *The Book of Lies* will be interpreted differently by each reader and judged accordingly.

A. d. R.

THE AGATE LAMP. By Eva Gore-Booth. (Longmans, 2s. 6d. net.)

"SHE lived but in a long, lamp-lighted dream," writes Miss Gore-Booth of the Anti-Suffragist, and the critic is sorely tempted to repeat this line as a summary of its author's own artistic attitude and achievement. Every one of her hundred pages is so solemn, so ordered, and so entirely premeditated, as to suggest kinship with the age of Dryden, that strong mind which gave us picturesque and measured prose in the guise of poetry. When we add that nimbleness of thought is allied to an easy deftness of phrasing, it will be gathered that Miss Gore-Booth has good title to our respect. More than that we cannot accord her, for there is little in

this volume that is born of the imperative urgency of high feeling ; we feel that all her adventuring has been of the intellect, with the emotions always subservient. "The calm-browed Muse in marble wrought"—to cite again one of her own phrases—seems to be her ideal, and it is difficult to avoid the impression that her interest in life is somewhat aloof from the immediate world about her, and is more nearly concerned with such visions of it as may be had at second-hand from the paintings of Da Vinci or the sculptures of Rodin. However it is poor criticism that will blame work for not rising to an argument that was never within the scope of its intention, and those who love good craft may be sure of finding here nothing that is either slipshod or tawdry, and much that is highly graphic and fortunate in diction.

W. T.

AGNUS DEI. By Nancy Campbell. (Maunsel, 6d. net.)

WE have here barely ten pages of verse on the one theme which gives the tiny booklet its title, and the very distinctive merit of the writer is that her subject-matter is interwoven, in the most natural way, with the home-spun of our common feelings and daily needs. If we are over-ready to scorn the sentiment as too slight or too insipid, it is yet so unaffectedly genuine and is expressed with such simple directness and propriety that we are constrained for the moment to share the writer's vision of a divinity which, for her, still walks among the highways and hedges.

W. T.

A LIST OF RECENT BOOKS

ENGLISH POETRY [ANNOTATED]

A Boy's Will. By Robert Frost. (Nutt. 1s. 6d. net.)

[Reviewed on p. 250.]

A Broken Friendship, and Other Verses. By A. V. Ratcliffe. (Erskine Macdonald. 3s. 6d. net.)

A Few Overs. By D. L. A. Jephson. (Heffer. 6d. net.)

A Voice from the Veld. By Mary Byron. (Dent. 2s. 6d. net.)

[Pleasant, musical verse, not particularly expressive of the Veld.]

Beginnings: Verses. By Roger Heath. (Blackwell. 1s. net.)

Dauber. By John Masefield. (Heinemann. 3s. 6d. net.)

[Reviewed under *Current English Poetry*, p. 201.]

First Poems. By Max Plowman. (Sidgwick & Jackson. 2s. 6d. net.)

[We would earnestly recommend this new—and presumably young—writer to forget tradition and to forgo the ambitious, that is as regards the manner and the matter of his craft. We would willingly barter the remainder of this volume against the choice simplicity and plain-worded wonder of "The Ballad of Jean and Jan" with which it opens. To pass immediately from this to the outworn pomposity of the "Elegy" that follows it is to come on grievous disappointment. Mr. Thomas Gray has been dead nigh one hundred and fifty years, and the manner that may be deemed properly creative for him is no more than a conventional accomplishment in one of our own day. In later pieces such as "Everyman" and "Marriage," the writer reveals a more individual outlook and music, and if he forswear copybook work and give us more of his real self, we shall read his future volumes with greater relish.]

Gloom and Gleam. By Teresa Hooley. (Fifield. 1s. net.)

[Readers of the *Daily Mirror* will not need introduction to these little personal lyrics of babies, faith, and God. The author should not write of Pan. We are convinced she has never even seen his shadow.]

Green Days and Blue Days. By Patrick Chalmers. (Maunsell. 3s. 6d. net.)

[Popular light verse reprinted from *Punch* and the *Westminster Gazette*.]

In Grey and Gold: Poems. By A. F. Gerald. (Blackwell. 1s. net.)

[An unassuming volume of minor verse mostly in the pastoral mood, and all quite clear and spontaneous.]

Ioläus : the Man that was a Ghost. By James A. Mackereth. (Longmans. 1s. 6d. net.)

[Fair verse, though too often didactic.]

Love-songs and Verses. By Mabel Constance Leigh. (Humphreys. 3s. 6d. net.)

Moses in Midian, and Other Verses. By H. E. Bannard. (Simpkin. 2s. net.)

[Moses, in Midian, tells the story of his flight from Egypt, and expounds the Christian religion. The author has no conception of the uses of blank verse.]

Moth-Wings. By F. W. Bourdillon. (Elkin Mathews. 3s. 6d. net.)

[Mr Bourdillon has a knack of taking a single apt simile or a single delicately imaged thought, and making a little "twi-winged" poem out of it. His famous lyric, "The Night has a Thousand Eyes," exhibits to perfection the qualities which characterise his verse.]

Mystic Trees : Poems. By Michael Field. (Eveleigh Nash. 5s. net.)

[Held over till the next number.]

Narcissus. By Edward Storer. (Priory Press. 2s. net.)

[Reviewed on p. 252.]

New Poems. By Dora Sigerson Shorter. (Maunsell & Co. 1s. net.)

[Charming musical verses belonging to the Victorian Age. "A Child's Song" recalls to our mind the delicate and beautiful verse of Amy Levy, now nearly forgotten. The appearance of this second edition proves that the love of poetry, simple, homely, though not always technically perfect, still exists.]

Ode of Triumph : November 1912. By W. E. Walkerdine. (Heffer. 6d. net.)

[An exercise of ridiculous pomposity, attributing responsibility for the victories of the Balkan League to God.]

Old World Ballads. By Padric Gregory. (Nutt. 2s. net.)

Passing the Love of Women, and Other Poems. By the Rev. E. E. Bradford. (Kegan Paul. 4s. 6d. net.)

[Mr. Bradford extols "Platonic" love between males to the deprecation of that love which "bards call Desire and Schoolmen Lust."

We will not worship woman nor condemn her,
She's part of Nature's plan.
Besides, we damn ourselves if we condemn her,
She is but meaner man.

Of "the love of women" the author is ostensibly not qualified to judge, as the above quotations should show; but the verses on individual boys (bathing or otherwise) have occasional charm.

His delicate white body seemed to gleam
Semi-transparent, like a statuette
Of alabaster, but with th' rosy tints
Of opalescence in chalcedony.

They are, however, too often spoilt by a certain smarminess of manner and by conclusion with a false platitude. As for his point of view, he might open his eyes if we told him all we thought about it.]

Perceptions. By R. B. Peck. (Elkin Mathews. 2s. 6d. net.)

Perse Playbooks. No. 3. Plays and Poems by Boys of the Perse School. (Heffer. 2s. 6d. net.)

[Held over till the next number.]

Poems and Verses by Father and Son. By Henry John Bulkeley and John Pierson Bulkeley. (Routledge. 2s. 6d. net.)

[Mr. H. J. Bulkeley possesses a metrical skill that is rarely found away from fine poetry. The faculty for writing polished verses is no uncommon one, but it is given to few to be able to vary the beat and break of their rhythm with such effect as in the following lines.

Rather I
Would take a shaft of the eternity
Which dwells within me as the midday sun,
Burning away that which it shines upon,
And give it you, and you, and you, my friends,
On one condition that, whatever bends
Your inclination, you will never take
A pen in hand and write it. For my sake
You'd promise this much. But I would not have
You bring it to yourselves, as misers save
Their choicest gems, but ever make it so
Your own that men may feel a sort of glow,
They wot not whence, when you are near to them,
Because I've humbly tried to touch the hem
Of God's whole robe, and touched it, and let you,
My friends, feel that I've touched it.

Unfortunately, the author's matter is seldom as interesting as this, most of his writing being in fact rather dull stuff. Mr. J. P. Bulkeley's contribution consists of fifteen pages of inferior verse at the end of the volume.]

Poems. By A. Hugh Fisher. (Elkin Mathews. 1s. net.)

[Technically uneven but interesting verse, showing a certain originality of conception.]

Poems. By Alice Meynell. Collected Edition. (Burns & Oates. 5s. net.)

[Held over till the next number.]

Poems. By John Alford. (Published for the author by the Poetry Bookshop. 2s. net.)

[Held over till the next number.]

Poems. By Louise Jopling Rowe. (Elkin Mathews. 2s. 6d. net.)

Songs of Alban. By Emilia Stuart Lorimer. (Constable. 2s. 6d. net.)

[Reviewed on p. 252.]

Songs of a Woman. By H. Gingold. (Hampstead: Hewetson. 5s. net.)

[Verses for the Hampstead drawing-room table, with a cabinet portrait of the authoress as frontispiece.]

Spikenard: a Book of Devotional Verse. By Ethel Ashton Edwards. (Heffer. 1s. net.)

The Adventurous Year, and Other Poems. By Martin Kinder. (Maunsell. 2s. 6d. net.)

The Call of the Mountains, and Other Poems. By J. E. Pickering. (Fifield. 1s. net.)

The Crimson West. By Kiriti Vekil Bey. (Bedford Press. 6d. net.)

[Sonnets on Europe's attitude towards Turkey.]

The Flood of Youth. By S. Spencer. (Fifield. 1s. net.)

The Muse in Exile. By William Watson. (Herbert Jenkins. 3s. 6d. net.)

[Reviewed under *Current English Poetry*, p. 201.]

The Quiet Spirit. By John Spencer Muirhead. (Blackwell. 2s. 6d. net.)

The Red Horizon : a Dialogue, and Other Verses. By E. Ryves. (Elkin Mathews. 1s. 6d. net and 1s. net.)

The Tail of the Hundred Eyes. By Clarine van Bergen Matson. (Claxton & Sons, Pimlico Road. 6d. net.)

The Wayside Altar. By Gilbert Thomas. (Chapman & Hall. 2s. 6d. net.)

[Religious poems in well-executed verse. The author hardly writes with the passionate apprehension of a mystic, but his faith is evidently more than book-taught.]

Words with Wings. By Charles G. Fall. (Elliot Stock. 3s. net.)

REPRINTS

Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany. Reprinted in facsimile from the edition of 1654. With Introduction and Notes by Herbert F. Schwartz. (Putnam's. 5s. net.)

A Western Awakening. By Bligh Talbot-Crosbie. Revised Edition. (Dublin : Hodges, Figgis. 2s. 6d. net.)

Cymbeline. Shakespeare. Edited by W. D. Howe. (Tudor Shakespeare. Macmillan. 1s. net.)

Erebus : a Book of Verse. By E. Ryves. New Edition. (Elkin Mathews. 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.)

Gaston de Foix : a Play in Three Acts. By Maurice Baring. (Blackwell. 2s. net.)

Julius Cæsar. Shakespeare. With North's Translation of Plutarch's "Julius Cæsar." Oxford Plain Texts. (Frowde : Clarendon Press. 2s. net.)

King Henry VI. : Part 3. Shakespeare. Edited by R. A. Law. (Tudor Shakespeare. Macmillan. 1s. net.)

Maurine, and Other Poems. By Ella Wheeler Wilcox. (Collins. 7d. net.)

Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Shakespeare. Edited by C. A. Smith. (Tudor Shakespeare. Macmillan. 1s. net.)

Poems and Idylls. By John Cullen. (Gay & Hancock. 4s. 6d. net.)

Selected Poems. Byron. (World's Classics. Frowde. 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.)

Selected Poems. Shelley. (World's Classics. Frowde. 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.)

The Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, Sonnets and Poems of Shakespeare. With Introduction by Dr. F. J. Furnivall and John Munro. Illustrated Edition. (Cassell. 5s. net.)

The Lady of Shalott, and Other Poems. Tennyson. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by B. C. Mulliner. (Frowde : Clarendon Press. 3s. 6d. net.)

The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar. Shakespeare. New Variorum Edition, edited by H. H. Furness. (Lippincott. 15s. net.)

The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus. Shakespeare. Edited by E. E. Stoll. (Tudor Shakespeare. Macmillan. 1s. net.)

AMERICAN POETRY

A Dome of Many-coloured Glass. By Amy Lowell. (Boston : Houghton Mifflin. 5s. net.)

Gawayne and the Green Knight. By Charlton M. Lewis. (Frowde. 4s. 6d. net.)

Lyrics from a Library. By Clinton Scollard. (New York : Browning. \$1.)

Porzia. By Cale Young Rice. (Hodder & Stoughton. 5s. net. New York : Doubleday Page. \$1.25.)

Sonnets and Quatrains. By Antoinette de Coursey Patterson. (Philadelphia : Fisher. 5s. net.)

The Vision. By Adelaide Addison Pollard. (Brooklyn : Pearl Press. 10 cents.)

FRENCH REPRINTS PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND

Le Pape, La Pitié Suprême, Religions et Religion, L'Ane. Victor Hugo. (Nelson. 1s. net.)

Œuvres de Molière. Complete in Six Volumes. (Nelson. 1s. net each.)

Toute la Lyre. Victor Hugo. 2 vols. (Nelson. 1s. net each.)

INDIAN

- Gitanjali (Song-offerings)*. By Rabindranath Tagore. A Collection of Prose Translations made by the Author from the original Bengali, with Introduction by W. B. Yeats. (New Edition. Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.)
- Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir*. Recorded by Ratan Devi : with Introduction and Translation by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, and a Foreword by Rabindranath Tagore. (Old Bourne Press. 10s. 6d. net.)

ANTHOLOGIES

- A Book of Historical Poetry*. (Arnold. 6d. net.)
- A Little Book of Courage*. Compiled by Annie Matheson. (Gay & Hancock. 2s. 6d. net.)
- Recitations for Little People*. By Alfred H. Miles. (Goodship House. 6d. net.)
- The Poetical Compendium : Three Centuries of the Best English Verse, 1680-1870*. Compiled by D. R. Broadbent. (Ouseley. 6s. net.)

TRANSLATIONS

- Ancient Gems in Modern Settings*. Being Versions of the Greek Anthology in English Rhyme, by various Writers. Edited by G. B. Grundy. (Blackwell. 5s. net.)
- Le Misanthrope*. Molière. Translated by C. H. Page. (Putnam's. 3s. 6d. net.)
- Sophocles*. Vol. ii. With English Translation by F. Storr. (Loeb Classical Library. Heinemann. 5s. net.)
- The Comedies of Aristophanes*. Vol. iii. Edited, with Translation, by B. B. Rogers. (Bell. 15s. net.)
- Poetry and Truth of my own Life*. Goethe. (Bohn's Popular Library. 2 vols. Bell. 1s. net each.)
- The Idylls of Theocritus*, and *The Eclogues of Virgil*. Translated into English Verse. (Bohn's Popular Library. Bell. 1s. net.)
- The Peace of Aristophanes*. Greek Text revised, with Translation by B. B. Rogers. (Bell. 10s. 6d. net.)
- The Ring of the Nibelung*. Wagner. English Version by Randle Fynes. (Smith, Elder. 2s. net.)

DRAMA

- Christopher Columbus : an Historic Drama in Four Acts*. By Roland Hill. (Low. 2s. 6d. net.)
- Four Plays : James and John, Miles Dixon, Mary's Wedding, A Short Way with Authors*. By Gilbert Cannan. (Sidgwick. 2s. 6d. net.)
- New Comedies*. By Lady Gregory. (Putnam's. 5s. net.)
- Palamon and Arcite : a Play for Puppets*. By Maurice Baring. (Blackwell. 2s. net.)
- Piers Gaveston : a Drama*. By William Gerard. (Elkin Mathews. 3s. 6d. net.)
- Plays : Second Series*. By August Strindberg. Translated, with Introduction, by Edwin Björkman. Author's Edition. (Duckworth. 6s. net.)
- Plays of Old Japan (The No)*. By Marie C. Stopes. Together with Translations of Four of the Plays by Marie C. Stopes and Prof. Joji Sakurai. (Heinemann. 5s. net.)
- Saint George, and Beowulf : Two Plays*. By Amice Macdonell. (Allen. 6d. net.)
- The Earth : a Modern Play in Four Acts*. By James Bernard Fagan (Theatrical Edition. Unwin. 1s. net.)
- The Great Adventure : a Play of Fancy in Four Acts*. By Arnold Bennett. (Methuen. 2s. net.)
- The Song of the Seal*. By Graham Price. (Gowans & Gray. 6d. net.)